JACKASS vs WWE! WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS OVER BACKYARD WRESTLING? FREE POSTERS

computer video

games

UK EXCLUSIVE!

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EVERY FORMAT

We've played it! First lowdown inside

EAT LEAD YANKEE!

CVG goes to war online

WWE EXPLOSION

Get hands-on with Raw 2 and Crush Hour

SILENT HILL 3®

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FREE THIS ISSUE

★ CVG'S INVALUABLE INSTANT EXPERT TIPS BOOKS!

★ FREE SILENT HILL 3 AND DEVIL MAY CRY 2 POSTERS!

IN THIS ISSUE

"THE BIGGEST AND BEST GAMES ARE IN CVG!"

PS2

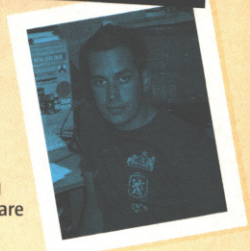
p.30

WORLD'S FIRST

WE'VE PLAYED IT!

SILENT HILL 3

SILENT? NO WAY!

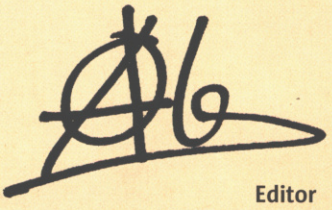


What's going on? There's usually a lull after Christmas, a terrifyingly quiet period devoid of good games and anything interesting as far as us gamers are concerned.

Things have been different this year. There's plenty to get excited about, like the news that Miyamoto is already working on a brand-new Zelda game for GBA, even before The Wind Waker hits GameCube. Then there's the sequel to Pikmin, the ultra-violence of Backyard Wrestling and Nokia's entry into proper handheld gaming to ensure we're all on the edge of our seats over the coming months.

But we've got something much more exciting than all of that, right here in this issue. CVG is the first mag in the entire world (no bullsh*t) to play Silent Hill 3. We've experienced the horror first-hand, battled with mutated demons and have managed to survive the nightmare to bring all the screens and info on what we reckon is going to be PS2's king of survival horror.

You'll agree with us too, if you've got the balls to flick to page 30 and live the nightmare. But you haven't got the balls, have you? Have you?



Editor

DEVIL MAY CRY 2

Stylish Hard Action returns to the PS2 but is it really stylish, hard, and action-packed? Find out here!

PS2

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DEAD OR ALIVE VOLLEYBALL

Xtreme Beach Volleyball, that is. How much fun can volleyball with half-naked computer girls be? Er, this much

XBOX

p.90

PRIDE FC

Controversial fighter takes the challenge to Virtua Fighter and Tekken

PS2

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INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

Featuring some tough guy trying to be Lara. Calls himself 'Indiana Jones'

XBOX

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HEROES ENLIST HERE

Answer these questions honestly:

1 Would you dare to escape the cruelty of the **FERRET KING**?

2 Are you brave enough to carry the sword of **MARTIN THE WARRIOR**?

3 Will you stand against evil and defend **REDWALL ABBEY** to the death?

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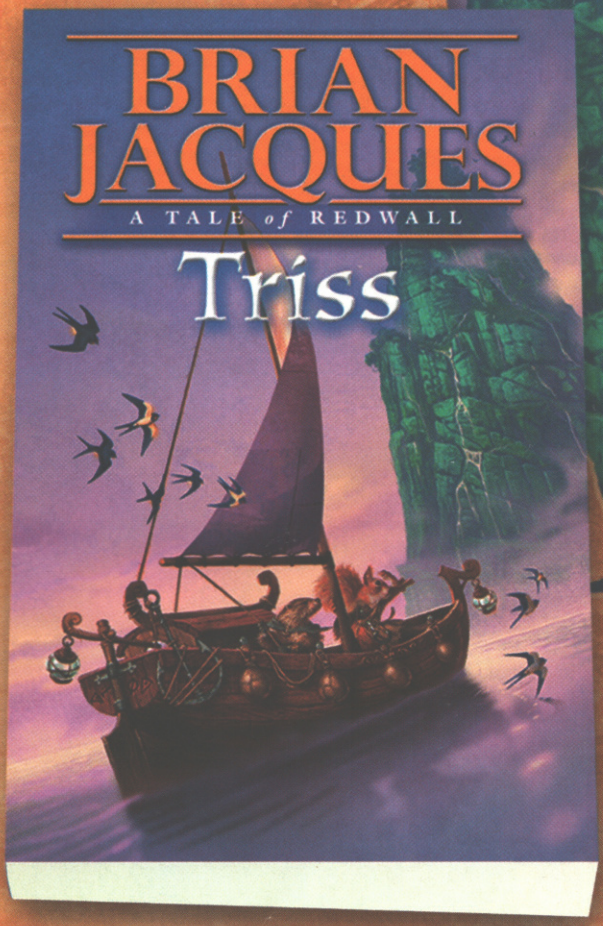

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PLANET CVG

THE HOTTEST GAMES & GOSSIP FR

EXCLUSIVE

BACKYARD WRESTLING

OUTRAGEOUS!

The moves in BYW are just plain crazy

DISGUSTING!

Bouts get sickeningly bloody in no time

BROKEN BONES, BUCKETS OF BLOOD, MENTAL WRESTLERS AND DIRTY GIRLS. THIS IS HARDCORE!

SmackDown! and Raw are for pussies! Giant perm-haired hulks exchanging slapsies in a ladder match is as gruesome as WWE gets. Now a new champ has arrived on the scene to prove what extreme wrestling is all about, and things are about to get messy. Introducing the king of hardcore, Backyard Wrestling.

BYW takes grappling to grizzly new heights: faces are bloodied and gashed open with crazy weapons like staple guns, and fighters perform body splashes from second-storey rooftops. Anything goes, and it usually does.

Eidos's extreme suburban fight fest bursts onto PS2 and Xbox this summer, and will feature the most famous BYW brawlers. The Insane Clown Posse, Madman Pondo and Backyard Babes such as Tylene Buck are all playable. Plus you can unlock a raunchy Babes movies to enjoy when you're not busy bashing an opponent's face with a splintered baseball bat.

A mental mixture of pleasure and pain, BYW promises to kick all other wrestling games hard in the nuts when it hits home consoles this summer. Grapple fans get excited, because CVG will of course be bringing you loads more on this growing underground phenomenon over the coming months.

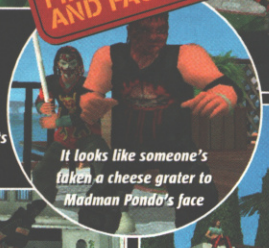
The BYW wrestlers defy every force of gravity

FIRST SHOTS AND FACTS

Good to see that silly outfits feature in BYW

Those pristine manicured lawns are unlikely to stay that way for long

Suplex and smash opponents onto objects



It looks like someone's taken a cheese grater to Madman Pondo's face

Career, Deathmatch, Exhibition and two-player are the only modes that have been revealed so far

XBOX RE-BOXED

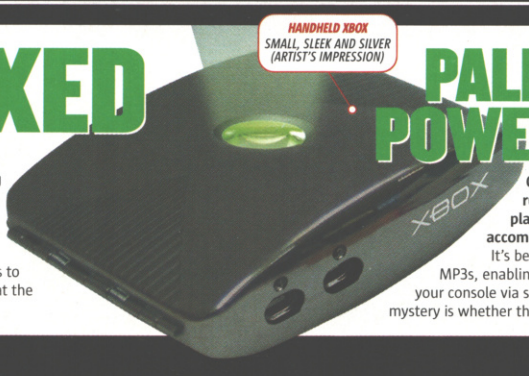
XBOX VERSION 1.5 NOW THAT'S MORE LIKE IT! (ARTIST'S IMPRESSION)

Numerous reliable industry sources are claiming that Microsoft is definitely going to reveal a smaller version of the Xbox at the E3 games show this May.

The machine is expected to boast the same internal hardware as the original console, and to feature similar dimensions to the PS2. Some sources are speculating that the machine will have a *silver* finish!

PALM-SIZED POWERHOUSE

HANDHELD XBOX SMALL, SLEEK AND SILVER (ARTIST'S IMPRESSION)



On top of this, Microsoft is rumoured to be uncovering its plans for a handheld device to accompany Xbox at E3.

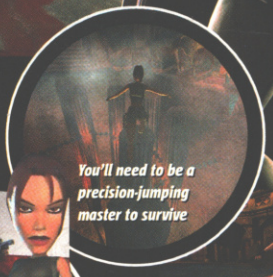
It's believed that the hardware will play MP3s, enabling you to download music from your console via some sort of link cable. But the big mystery is whether the machine will play games.

PICTURE UPDATE

LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: the angel of dar

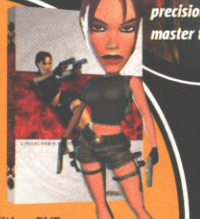
NEW AREAS AND ACTION UNCOVERED!

This blood-soaked pic supports the widespread opinion that The Angel Of Darkness is set to be the most sinister Lara game to date



You'll need to be a precision-jumping master to survive

Admire the curvy, well-crafted and beautiful floor tiles... ahhh



BONUS BOOTY

Lucky US punters who pre-order The Angel Of Darkness from Electronics Boutique will be rewarded with a limited edition DVD for their eagerness, featuring a making-of and other cool tit-bits. And a Lara bobblehead figure will be given to anyone who pre-orders from GameStop.

CVG asked a spokesperson for Eidos whether we can expect similar promotional goodies in the run up to the UK launch, and you'll be happy to hear that there *are* plans in pipeline for pre-order bonus gifts.

Nowhere to run and nowhere to hide. Bugger!

As well as the traditional sneaky stealth manoeuvres, Lara now possesses mad hand-to-hand combat moves including groin-straining high kicks. Ye-ouch!

HALF PRICE HEROES

NINTENDO REVEALS BUDGET GAMES FOR CUBE

On April 4 you'll be able to pick up Luigi's Mansion, Pikmin and Super Smash Bros for a mere 20 quid each. But wait – that's just the half of it.

Nintendo has promised that its forthcoming Player's Choice range will expand rapidly soon after it's launched, enabling you to fatten up your collection of GameCube games without severely denting your bank account. Wahey!

DRESSED TO KILL

Surely this is some sort of sick joke. What could possibly make Nintendo's bold adventurer betray his classic green tunic for these sharp red threads? His cameo appearance in Soul Calibur II, of course!

This is the first image of Link's alternative outfit in the GameCube version of Namco's forthcoming fight-me-do. Looking good, fella.

PLAYSTATION POO

Sony is celebrating its worldwide shipment of 50 *million* PS2s with the release of three new limited-edition machines in Japan. But jeez, Sony, why the crap colours?

Gold, Perspex, multi-coloured... nope. Sakura (granny pink), Aqua (baby blue) and Silver (tramp grey)! Nice one, Sony. You might as well have released turd-brown, puke-speckled and snot-coloured consoles. Or are you saving those for the 100 million mark?

FED TO THE WOLVES

WOLFENSTEIN: ENEMY TERRITORY ON PC WELL 'N' TRULY TRASHED!

It's not all bad news, though. The retail version of Enemy Territory may have been canned due to issues with the single-player, but the multiplayer game is still alive and kicking!

Later this year multiplayer Enemy territory will be released as a *free* downloadable expansion for Return To Castle Wolfenstein.

Developer id Software commented on the reason for canning the one-player game: "Despite a strong effort from talented developers, the single-player portion of the game did not progress as anticipated. Cancelling the release was a difficult decision made in the best interest of the Wolfenstein franchise and fans."

Disappointing as it is, at least we can all get a potentially awesome freebie out of the whole cock-up.

Hopefully the PS2 and Xbox versions won't suffer a similar fate

SUNNY DELIGHT

EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK

CVG SHEDS LIGHT ON KOJIMA'S KOOKY HANDHELD CREATION

He's crazier than a sack of badgers, but Metal Gear's creator Hideo Kojima might have struck gaming gold once again.

His weird light-sensitive vampire-slaying game Boktai for Game Boy Advance is looking like it could become a surprise hit, thanks to its super-innovative gameplay and funky visual styling.

Boktai, short for 'Bokura No Taiyo' meaning 'My Sun', is an action role-player that'll see you battling vampires over vast environments, armed with a bizarre weapon that emits light. Details are thin on the ground at the moment, but it appears that you can only charge your weapon by playing Boktai outside, enabling the light-sensitive cartridge to absorb real sunlight.

Tons more information is expected to flood out of Konami HQ in the near future, so stay tuned for all the latest on Boktai in next month's Planet CVG. But until then feast your peepers on these awesome exclusive pics.

Harness the power of the sun! And yes, that means actually going outside

The adventure kicks off in an eerie city called Kiri

A beam shoots out of the disc at the back of the gun and travels through the magnifier to produce a deadly blast...

Meet Dyango, Boktai's mysterious, nattily-attired Manga-style hero

The game's graphics have a real gothic edge. Tim Burton, eat your heart out

DAVE MIRRA IS SUING ACCLAIM, AND IS SEEKING £13M FOR THE IMPROPER

TO CELEBRATE IT'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY KONAMI IS CHANGING ITS LOGO

USE
FROM

GTA IV: GANG BANG REVEALED!

The first driblets of info on the next Grand Theft Auto game for PS2 have been uncovered!

Dubiously entitled GTA IV: Gang Bang, the sequel to worldwide phenomenon Vice City is online, and promises to be heaps crazier than its ultra-violent predecessor.

The action is set in 1930s downtown Chicago, and will see you and up to 127 other online participants getting into gangs and fighting it out for territory and notoriety.

You'll be able to take hostages and torture enemy gang members: paper-cut victims across the mouth, drop them in baths full of electric eels, and squeeze their heads in a vice. Sick stuff!

No other details have been revealed, but CVG will be sure to bring you all the latest on Gang Bang in the run-up to its eagerly awaited release on 1 April 2004. Watch this space.

WATCH MOVIES ON GBA!

A company called AM3 is releasing a GBA peripheral on May 23 in Japan that will enable gamers to download and play cartoons, movie trailers, music and all sorts on their beloved handheld.

The Smart Media Adaptor is a device that slots into the cartridge slot of your GBA, and can play around 24 minutes of movie footage with a 32mb Smart Media Card, and up to 192 minutes with a 258mb card.

Tons of companies have jumped on board to offer content for the new product, including movie, music and games studios. But perhaps the most exciting news is that Pokémon and other Bandai cartoons will be available for download when it goes on sale early this summer.

AM3 will be showing off its nifty bit of kit at the upcoming E3 games expo in LA this May. CVG will be there to bring you all the hot news on this potentially amazing product straight from the front line.

The cards slide neatly into the Smart Media Adaptor, which slots snugly into the GBA cart slot

The peripheral is compatible with regular Game Boy Advance and the flashy new GBA SP

Download picture galleries, movies, cartoons, e-books and music onto the Smart Media Cards

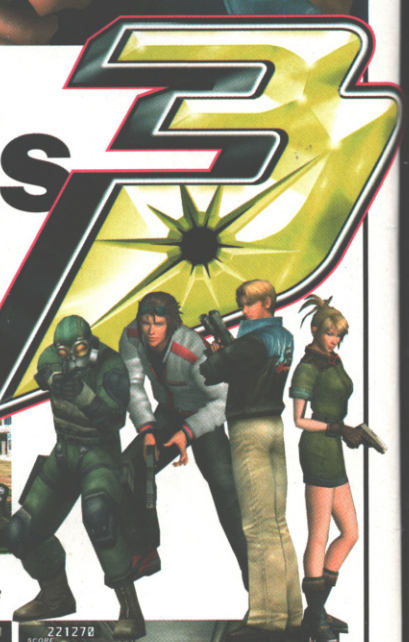
Duck behind the rock or you're toast! Now terrorists have flamethrowers too

TIME CRISIS 3

REVEALED: CRAZY NEW LEVELS, INSANE ENEMIES AND WICKED WEAPONS

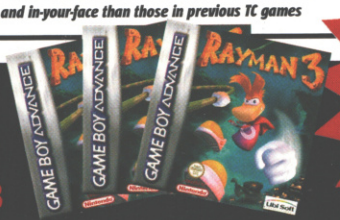
Scroll through your weapons, select the Uzi 9mm, and lay down some furious suppressing fire

Some of the levels are far more claustrophobic and in-your-face than those in previous TC games



THIS GBA SP COULD BE YOURS!

WIN: NINTENDO'S HANDSOME NEW HANDHELD AND FIVE COPIES OF RAYMAN 3

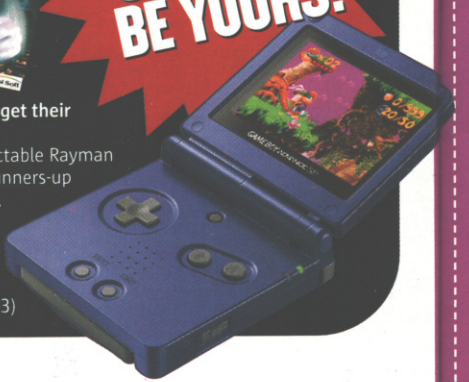


Handheld lovers everywhere are itching like flea-riddled mutts to get their paws on GBA SP, and CVG has got one to give away!

The jammy winner will also bag a copy of the GameCube-connectable Rayman 3 handheld adventure as well as the sexy new GBA SP. Four lucky runners-up will each win a copy of the game. And it couldn't be simpler to win.

■ What is the name of Rayman's fat gobby mate?

Send your answer on a postcard to Gimme a GBA SP! CVG, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD (deadline for entries: 9 April 2003)



PILLARS. NEW STAGES INCLUDE A MOONBASE. GET EXCITED!

THEY'RE NOT LIGHTGUNS! EACH ACTS AS ONE HALF OF A PAD

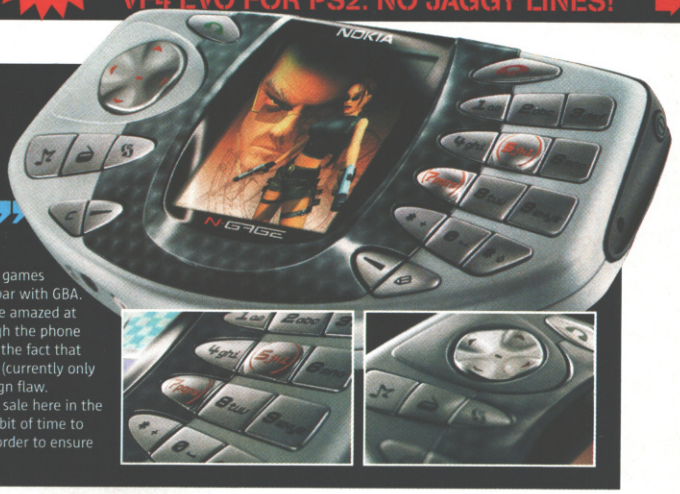
FATHER CHRISTMAS HAS BEEN KILLED!

HELL'S ANGEL

WIN: Devil May Cry 2. CVG has FIVE copies to give away

VF4 EVO FOR PS2: NO JAGGY LINES!

"MARRIED TO YOUR HANDHELD?" "NO, JUST N-GAGED"



Hardcore gamers and mobile phone junkies are very similar breeds. Neither can be parted from its respective handheld and handset partners. But nor is either ultimately happy.

Gamers would love to make calls on their handhelds and likewise the phoneys would love to play Game Boy Advance-quality games on their handsets. So a little company called Nokia has come up with a solution that attempts to satisfy both tribes: N-Gage.

Support from powerhouse publishers such as Activision, Eidos and Sega, and big-name games like Tomb Raider and Sonic make N-Gage a seriously tempting piece of kit. Especially as the actual quality of the games and graphics appear to be technically on a par with GBA.

CVG got hands-on with N-Gage and were amazed at how small and lightweight it is. But although the phone has more features than 007's Aston Martin, the fact that the battery life is so poor for playing games (currently only a couple of hours) seems to be a major design flaw.

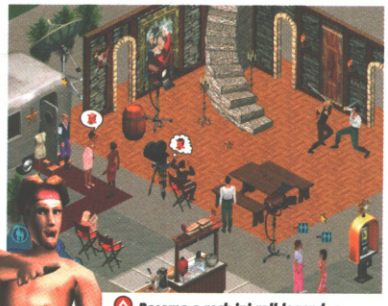
However, N-Gage is only going to go on sale here in the UK this winter, so Nokia have still got a fair bit of time to tinker about with its handsome handset in order to ensure everything's just right for launch.

The Sims Superstar EXPANSION PACK

The big time beckons. This latest expansion pack opens massive new doors to your Sims.

They can become celebrity media moguls, live like kings and enjoy all the luxuries and controversies that fame brings. Or they could end up washed-up and forced to take scrappy jobs such as late-night personal hygiene adverts. Yuck!

Loads of new quirky characters, hilarious scenarios and fun new features have been thrown in. So get ready to roll out the red carpet for Sims Superstar when it saunters into town this May.



Become a rock 'n' roll legend, a supermodel, or a movie star and receive adulation from screaming fans and a little too much attention from freaks

SPOOKY ONLINE ACTIVITY

Capcom's classic Ghosts 'N Goblins series is about to enter an eerie new dimension populated by scary weirdoes and Americans: the Web.

Makaimura Online or Ghosts 'N Goblins Online is a joint project for Capcom and Game Factory, and is expected to launch in Japan in spring 2004. But what's most shocking is that instead of keeping its arcade-style roots, revived in the brilliant Maximo on PS2, this Ghosts 'N Goblins outing is a massively multiplayer RPG and it's coming to PC before it's released on other platforms.

No news has surfaced about if and when we can expect a European version, but Planet CVG is chasing up all leads to find out what's the score, and will be bringing you all the latest as soon as soon as poss.

EXCLUSIVE

PRICELESS PRIMAL PRIZES

WIN: LIMITED-EDITION PRIMAL TREASURES

Only one special-edition guitar and one leather jacket have been made to promote Sony's gothic stunner Primal.

They've appeared in an advert for the game, but CVG has managed to get hold of them to give away to one lucky reader!

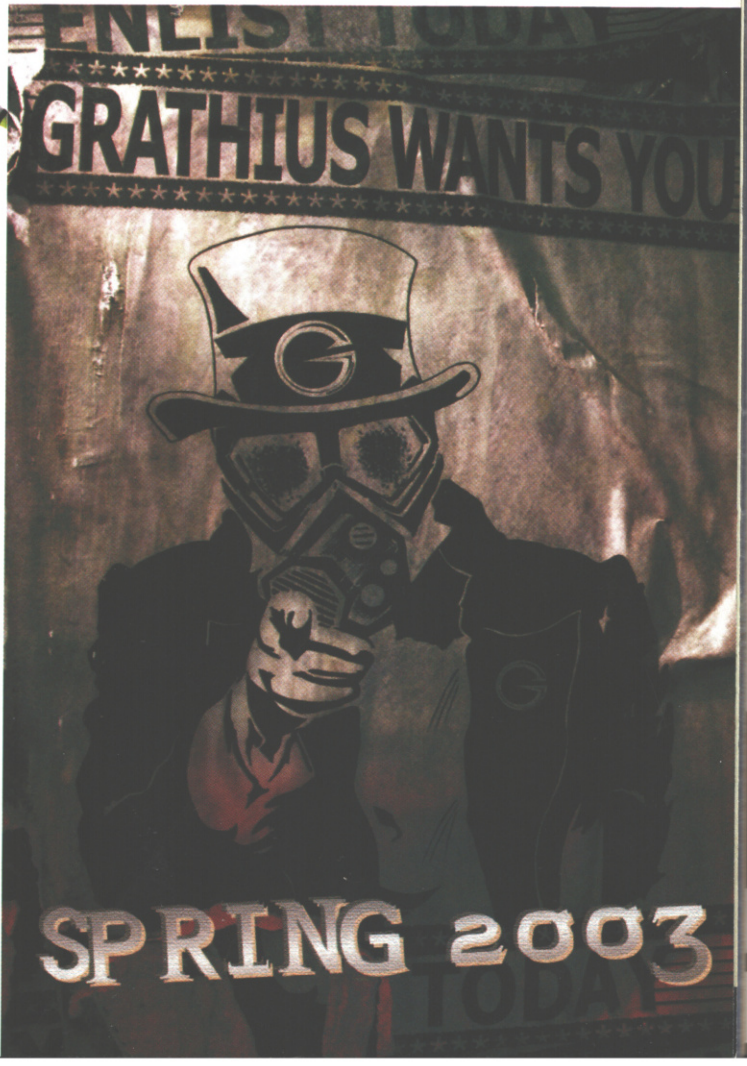
This wicked, exclusive-to-CVG prize is 100 per cent unique, and could be yours if you can answer this total no-brainer.

What are the names of the new duo that appear in Sony's Primal?

- A.....Reeves and Mortimer
- B .....Oxide and Neutrino
- C ..... Blair and Bush
- D ..... Jen and Scree

WIN BOTH NOW!

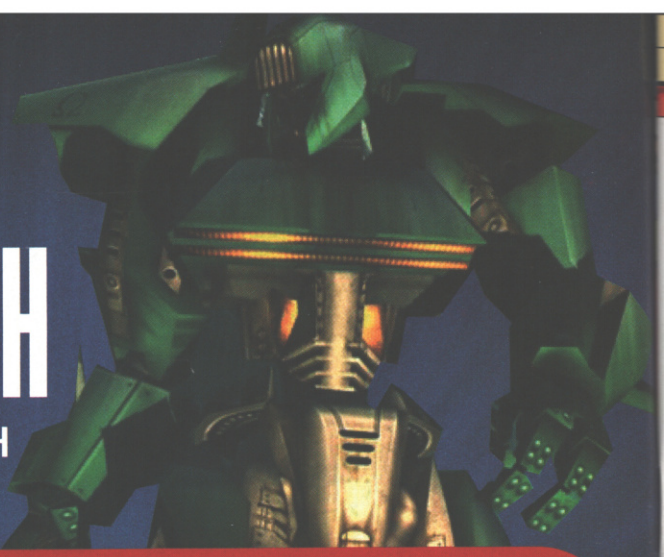
Send your answers on a postcard to Priceless Primal Prizes, CVG, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD (deadline for entries 9 April 2003)



BTopenworld

MORE TO PLAY WITH

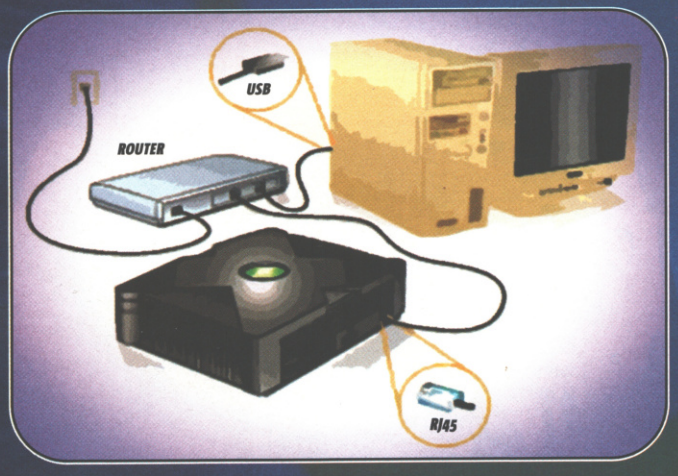
GET YOURSELF A BROADBAND CONNECTION WITH BT OPENWORLD AND SEE WHAT A DIFFERENCE IT MAKES TO YOUR GAMING LIFESTYLE



Broadband will revolutionise the way you play games, you can be sure of that. With internet connection speeds up to 10x faster than a standard dial-up account connection, you will be amazed by the difference broadband makes. In fact, to access Xbox Live, broadband is an essential.

If you've decided that broadband is a must, the next step is to find the best Internet Service Provider (ISP). As a preferred Xbox Live! supplier, BT Openworld offers everything you need for rocket-speed, feel-the-bandwidth online gaming, and a lot more besides.

Broadband via a phone line (ADSL) is now available to 66% of homes in the UK, so you've a great chance of accessing Broadband via BT Openworld. What's more, you could be broadband gaming less than nine days from now, if you're covered by BT Openworld. All this convenience is a small part of what makes BT Openworld a top choice for broadband, especially if your home has a compatible PC. And you can enjoy unlimited broadband internet access with the BT Openworld Home 500 Plug & Go, Line only package at just £29.99 per month.*



BROADBAND VS DIAL-UP

Broadband is all about speed. When you're competing online in a fast action scenario, whether you're fighting, shooting, or playing sports, you want the game to react as quickly as you can.

With a standard dial-up narrowband internet connection, your performance is greatly restricted by the slow exchange of information with the game server. Very simply, if you hit the button at the exact same time as the other guy, whoever has the fastest connection will come out on top.

Generally broadband gives you a connection of up to 10x the speed you're currently used to. Almighty, exciting updates for your games – new levels, new characters, and more – can be received using a broadband connection, where it would take a whole day using a standard 56K dial-up modem. If you want to take the next big step in gaming, you have to go with broadband, it's just a matter of when.

WHEN YOU'RE NOT GAMING

With BT Openworld Broadband you can talk on the phone, surf the internet and play games at the same time if you wish!

With a PC you can make the most of BT Openworld's services in addition to the godly internet connection. First of all you have a Spam/Virus filtered email account that includes 10 addresses, handled by Microsoft Outlook. Plus your BT Openworld internet account can be accessed from any internet-connected computer in the world.

There's 50Mb of web space available to build your own website. Meantime enjoy the fruits of the pros on the BT Openworld Network. Check out the ultimate one stop shop for online music – dotmusic.com, featuing the latest breaking music news, reviews, interviews and a music download service. You can view a wide range of video-on-demand sports action and news on Sportal.com, plus games news from gamesdomain.com. And there's always BBC Broadband News if you're feeling intellectual...

sportal.com BTopenworld

dotmusic what's your sound?

OTHER BT OPENWORLD BENEFITS

WITH BT OPENWORLD BROADBAND, YOU GET MORE THAN JUST A SPEEDY INTERNET CONNECTION:

- **Surf and talk on the same line at the same time.** No need to have a second phone line anymore (normal call charges apply)
- **It's 'always on' access.** You no longer have to dial up. There are no time restrictions, because you can leave it on all day
- **FREE fully featured POP3 email service.** 10 email addresses with your account, which includes Microsoft Outlook Express
- **FREE email virus/spam protection.** Automatic scanning and filtering of all your BT Openworld emails for viruses and junk emails
- **FREE BT Openworld webmail.** Access your email from any Internet-connected computer in the world
- **FREE 50Mb web space to build your own website.** DIY your very own gaming website, or whatever else takes your fancy
- **BT Openworld Pay-As-You-Go conventional Internet account.** A dial-up back-up for your broadband connection
- **Safer surfing.** When you sign up, there's a free 45-day trial of BT Openworld parental control from CyberPatrol (£31.95 per annum after that if you want to contine)
- **Comprehensive 24/7 local-rate technical help.** Any questions, about your ADSL account, help is at hand all day and all night

* BT Openworld requires a BT line. All orders subject to availability, compatibility and line test. 12 month minimum rental line applies from date of activation. Payable by Visa, Visa/Delta, Mastercard. Terms and conditions apply. **You may also need additional equipment to connect you Xbox and PC to broadband. For more information visit www.lineonly.com/xbox**

GO TO IT

If you want to find out more about BT Openworld Broadband or order today, visit their website at www.btopenworld.com/broadband or call 0845 6014738 (quoting Xbox)

WWW.BTOPENWORLD.COM

TURN THE PAGE FOR FEROCIOUS NEW PICS

DEATH BREATH
Scorching new details on Breath Of Fire: Dragon Quarter

WIN: A LINK TO THE PAST FOR GBA

DANCE WITH THE DEVIL

FIVE COPIES OF DEVIL MAY CRY 2 UP FOR GRABS!

Capcom's killer thriller is back, and this time Dante has company!

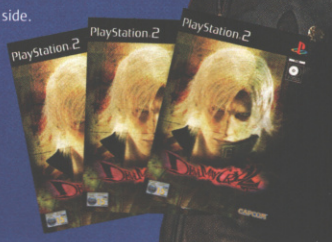
The half-demon hero has a fiery redhead by the name of Lucia on his side. Equipped with similar demon-juggling talents to those of her crimson-cloaked compadre, she's a class-A badass bitch.

CVG has got five copies of this gruesome gothic adventure to give away. All you gotta do to be in with a shot of bagging DMC2 for free is send us the correct answer to this simple brain-teaser.

What is the name of Dante's demon overlord father?

- ☐ A .....Sparda
- ☐ B .....Beelzebub
- ☐ C .....Lucifer
- ☐ D .....Jim

Send your answers on a postcard to Dance With The Devil, CVG, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD (deadline for entries: 9 April 2003)



SANTA'S DEAD!

The geekiest and most unamusing human beings ever to grace planet Earth play Ultima Online for PC. So imagine CVG's shock on hearing reports that a cool and funny event took place within its online realm over Christmas 2002.

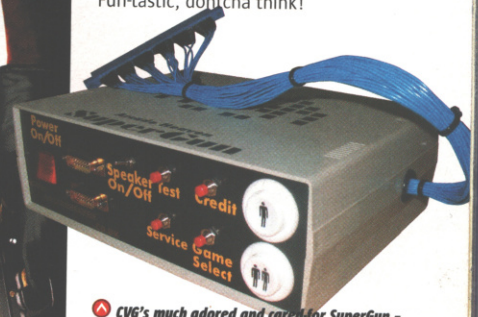
You'll need a bit of background info first, though: outside every city in the game there are AI guards who protect the perimeter and automatically defend you if you're being attacked as you approach the city limits.

Okay, so here's what happened: the developer, Origin, decided it would be a nice gesture to have Santa visit the Ultima cities. But when Santa turned up with his reindeer, a handful of online gamers thought it would be funny to poke, prod, and provoke his trusty steeds. Bad move! On seeing this, the moronic AI guards launched an offensive, assuming that the townspeople were being attacked by beasts. The outcome? The guards all slaughtered Rudolph et al, murdered Santa and then cut his head off and stuck it on a pole. Ha ha ha ha ha!

IT'S A SUPERGUN, DAMMIT!

There's your answer. CVG headquarters has been bombarded with emails and letters asking what contraption we used to play our Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution arcade board shown in last month's preview.

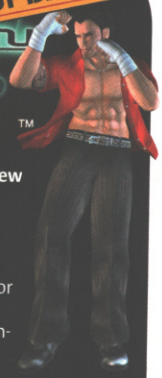
The SuperGun is a brilliant gadget. It's basically a console that plays JAMMA arcade boards. And you can pick one up from www.arcadeheaven.co.uk for a mere £170, which includes a joypad and a one-year guarantee. Fun-tastic, dontcha think!



CVG's much adored and cared for SuperGun – in't it lurrvely? You can nab one for 170 squids

EXCLUSIVE UPDATE

Virtua Fighter 4 EVOLUTION
VIRTUA FIGHTER 4



Sega has confirmed that its fighting masterpiece will be bursting into UK stores in June or July of this year, only a few months after its Japan release!

Plus, more good news has surfaced about the home console version. The character models will look crisp and smooth, not all jaggedy like the last arcade conversion for PS2, meaning that the series will finally give Tekken a run for its money in the looks department.

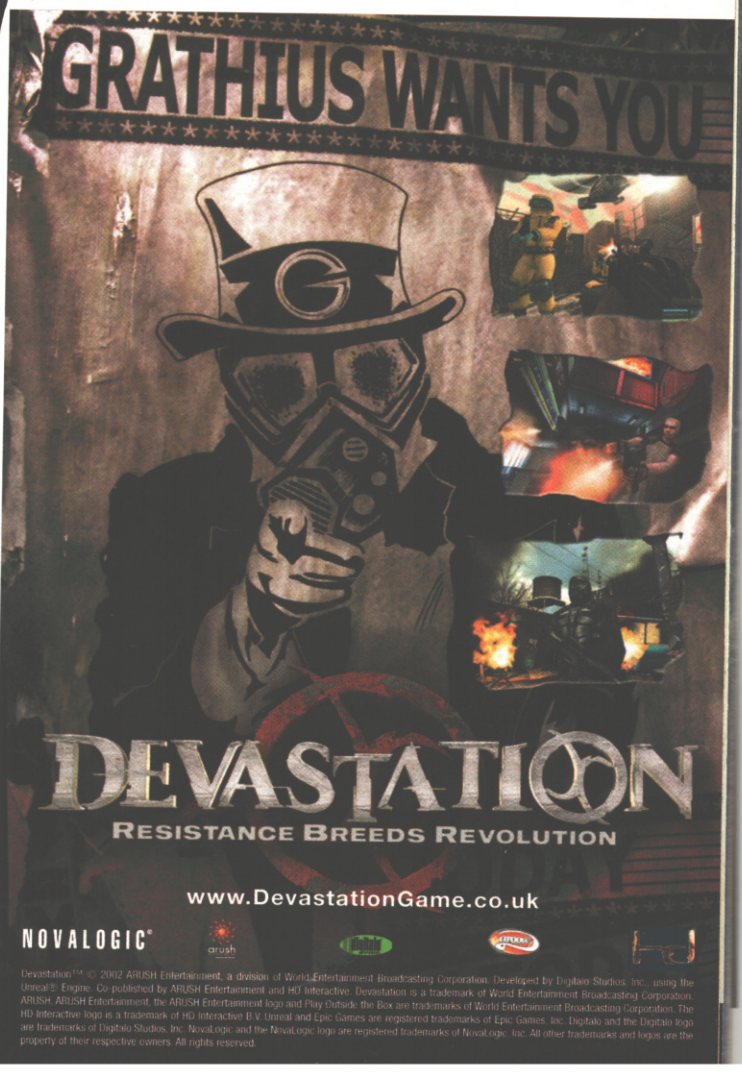
CVG will be bringing you a blinding preview of the English-language version of VF4 Evo on PS2 next issue. Don't miss it!

1 *Brad Burns flashes his tats and flexes his beefy biceps to intimidate opponents*

2 *All the arenas have had a major visual overhaul since last time round. Beautiful!*

3 *Goh Hinogami is easily the meanest fighter ever to enter the VF universe*

NEXT MONTH
HANDS-ON PREVIEW OF VF4 EVO ON PS2



Q*Bert

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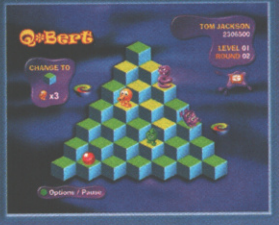
PRESS interactive ON YOUR SKY REMOTE CONTROL

AND CHOOSE GOPLAYTV NOW !

Press interactive on your Sky Remote + choose GoPlayTV

Q*Bert



Arcade style multiplayer gameplay

A cool range of Daily and Weekly prizes

Play with four players and save your games

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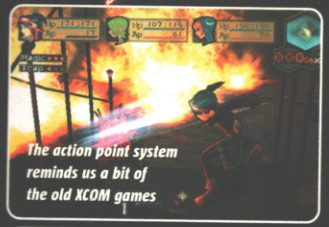
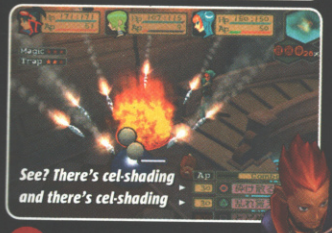
FLAMIN' HELL!

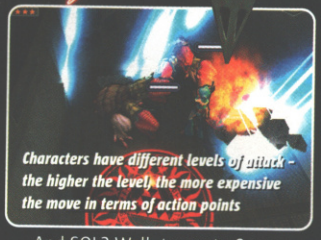
BREATH OF FIRE™ DRAGON QUARTER™



The action point system reminds us a bit of the old XCOM games



See? There's cel-shading and there's cel-shading



Characters have different levels of attack - the higher the level, the more expensive the move in terms of action points

Any videogame that uses PETS and SOL as selling points sounds alright by us. Except you can forget gun-toting Chihuahuas drunk on Mexican lager.

No, we're in the land of goblin-fanciers and gameplay features with silly acronyms meant to convey how properly genius they are. Okay, so we have sarcasm issues here at CVG...

Anyway, what do we know? Since 1993 the BoF series has sold millions on SNES, PSone and more recently GBA, and to BoF-fers across Europe, including CVG's Lee, such detail is like chocolate muffins at a fat farm.

So, to fill you in, PETS stands for Positive Encounters and Tactics System and SOL for Scenario Overlay System (strangely), and sarcasm aside, they're part of what's making Breath Of Fire V look to be the series' most promising yet.

For starters, it's an all-new game and the series' first version on PS2, it has gone 3D, and cel-shaded at that, and while turn-based battling returns, the PETS system now lets you set decoys like raw meat, and traps like bombs before getting into a fight.

Once in a scrap, your party members' actions are restricted by points, which can be spent on movements and attacks or spells depending on your tactics. Players will have to learn how best to connect similar levels of attack, so they can bust out linked combos for added pain over and above regular damage.

And SOL? Well, to quote Capcom: "What the player has accomplished up to a certain point carries over to the newly restarted game. Based on the player's previous accomplishments, not only do experience points and items carry over, but additional in-game events and dungeons will appear so that players can learn more about the story."

So, clear as mud then. Nevermind, we'll fill in the gaps when we see code soon, so keep your eyes CVG-wards. Release should be around about this summer.

We've come a long way since BoF debuted in '93

Bottom right shows button assignments

BoF-FING IT

Based in a subterranean world where an ecological disaster has forced civilisation to live for many generations in an ancient underground city called Shelter, the setting is less traditional than usual for a role-player, mixing dungeons and swords with automatic doors, offices and trains.

BoF V starts with a ranger called Ryu having a 'sudden awakening' and he vows to discover what lurks above, with help from fellow underground denizens he picks up along the way.

Early on, Ryu rescues a girl who seems to have wings. A clue if ever there was one for fans

MAY THE TRIFORCE BE WITH YOU...

WIN ZELDA ON GBA!

Handheld heaven is Hyrule-shaped, and CVG is giving you a chance to win a slice of palm-sized paradise with five copies of The Legend Of Zelda: A Link To The Past up for grabs.

All you've got to do to stand a chance of blagging a copy of this awesome adventure is tell us which Zelda game this screenshot is from.

Send the correct answer on postcard to May The Triforce Be With You, CVG, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD (Deadline for entries 9 April 2003).

You could win this fine example of Zelda magic on Game Boy Advance!

computer and video GAMES
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WE MAKE THIS MAGAZINE. YOU ENJOY READING IT. SORTED

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UPCOMING SUMMER BLOCKBUSTER BAD BOYS II WILL ALSO BE COMING TO PS2, XBOX, GC & PC THIS CHRISTMAS

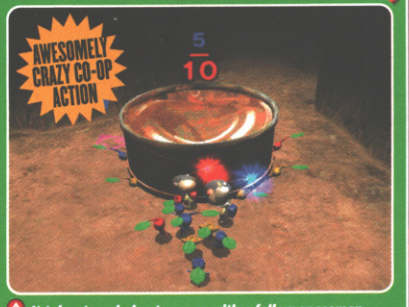
PIKMIN 2

EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK

Here are the first pictures of the sequel to Nintendo's ultra-cutesy strategy adventure! And yes, that is split-screen multiplayer action that you can see in one of the shots.

Cooperative and versus modes will both be available in this exciting follow-up, but precise details of how it will all work are still thin on the ground. Stay tuned for more facts on Pikmin 2 in our next issue.

The dopey-looking fella on the left is called Loozy, one of the new playable characters



It takes two, baby: team up with a fellow spaceman and get to it, tackling the puzzles together

Go head to head and test your Pikmin management skills to the max in the tense split-screen versus mode

KIRBY ON CUBE

Nintendo has revealed an all-new Kirby title for GameCube.

Kirby's Air Ride is a tasty-looking racer that has heaps in common with the classic Mario Kart games – including brilliantly quirky tracks, heaps of power-ups and bucket-loads of style.

Nintendo hasn't yet confirmed a release date for Air Ride, and the first hands-on experience is only expected to take place at the E3 games expo in Los Angeles this May. But CVG will be there to bring you the full scoop.

Twat fellow racers with nutty power-up weapons

Kirby surfs along on a cool hovering star

CVG MEETS MIYAMOTO

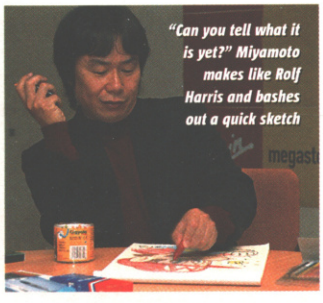
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE CREATOR OF MARIO AND ZELDA

■ CVG: Can you tell us a about the concept behind the use of wind in the Wind Waker?

■ Miyamoto: We initially came up with the idea of oceans and how Link can move – so we thought, why don't we use a ship to ferry him? And in order to do this we needed to have wind, and so we gave the player some control over the wind. We were thinking in terms of the advancement of technology, and while many people focus upon more beautiful graphics, we really wanted to [...] advance the other areas no one else was thinking about. And that happened to be the control of the wind, by taking advantage of the high-performance GameCube. It's unlike anything else out there.

■ CVG: Was there anything you didn't put in?

■ Miyamoto: First of all, due to time restraints, we had to leave out two stages, which included dungeons. Other than that, most of the ideas were incorporated into the final game.


"Can you tell what it is yet?" Miyamoto makes like Rolf Harris and bashes out a quick sketch

■ CVG: The new style of Zelda is a radical change and when first shown it sent shockwaves through the industry. Can we expect the same kind of shock with Mario 128?

■ Miyamoto: We never intended to cause any shockwaves, but we are always trying to make something new. We are, of course, trying to be consistent, but create something new. And with Wind Waker, we were making a new Link. We were confronted with problems by going ahead with making a realistic-looking Link initially, and were a little uncomfortable with this. Realistic Link would be expected to move in accordance with how he would in the real world, but in terms of the game that was unnatural, even though in the real world it would be natural. If Link looks and moves realistically, that doesn't necessarily make a good game.

That's the basic argument we had while forming the Link character into its current shape. [As for] Mario 128, we haven't come to the specific point yet where we've determined how the Mario character will look. I don't plan to create any shockwaves – I'm just always thinking about making perfect gameplay.

■ CVG: Now that you've created the graphic and gameplay engine for Wind Waker, are you going to re-use it?

■ Miyamoto: It is now taking a long time to come up with the basic engine for whatever we're working on, so if we can make use of existing technology, that's obviously better for me as a producer. As a producer and a games designer, I'm hopeful we can make use of the Wind Waker engine for future games. And since the functionality of the GameCube is so high I'm sure this will be the case.

■ CVG: Given the child-like look of the game versus a mass-market thirst for realism, do you see any problems reaching a large-scale audience? How will Zelda appeal?

■ Miyamoto: We have a very popular cartoon moviemaker in Japan who is appealing to adults and children alike, and many fans of these animated movies are parents. I don't believe making use of the cartoon style of graphics in Wind Waker is any kind of handicap. More importantly for Nintendo, we are always trying to produce a variety of different things for a variety of audiences. The games industry in Japan is suffering hard times and there is a lot of hardship. But on the other hand, looking at the movie industry we have had different films that have stimulated the market.

I don't think it's a good idea just to focus on the games industry. If everybody is getting on the same bandwagon and doing the same thing, [they are] minimising and shrinking the market. What's more important for game design is coming up with unique ideas rather than something similar – that's boring.

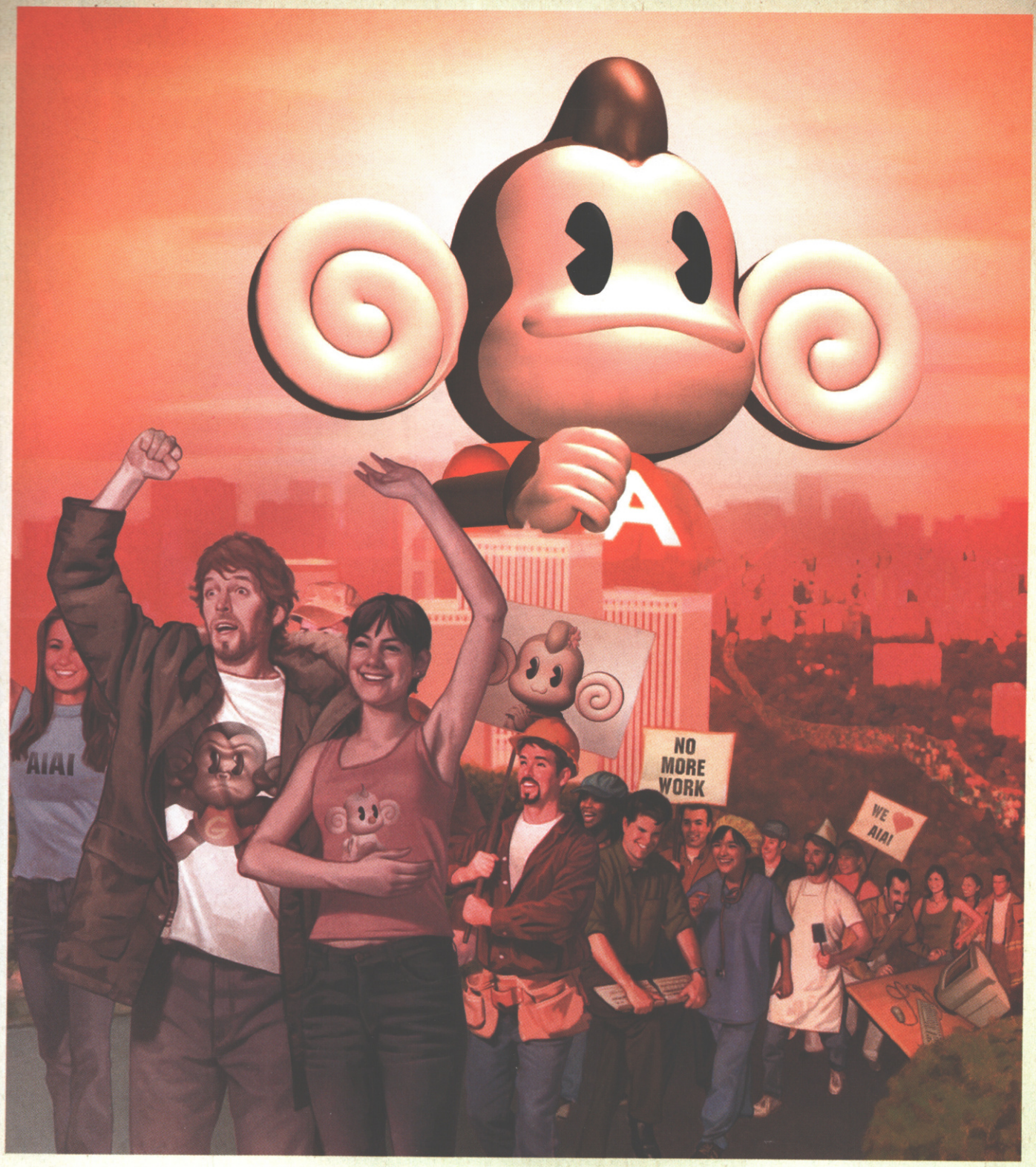
WIN A MIYAMOTO-SIGNED ZELDA ISSUE!

Nintendo's gaming legend was generous enough to sign five copies of CVG's Zelda issue (no. 256), and while we'd have liked to hold onto them, they're up for grabs here! To be in with a chance of getting your mitts on one of these awesomely unique prizes simply answer the following question:

■ In 1981 Shigeru Miyamoto created his first arcade game, featuring a giant gorilla and a fat, moustachioed Italian. What was it called?

Send your answer on a postcard to Signed Zelda Issue, CVG, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD (deadline for entries: 9 April 2003)

SEGA, A



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XBOX LIVE LEADS BROADBAND ASSAULT

A new era is dawning and you'd better believe it. Lord knows, CVG has been through enough over the years to know our eras from our elbows. And now one of the big boys of videogames has shown a new Way Forward. Microsoft Xbox Live has taken broadband gaming by the scruff of the neck and hurled it to the masses.

We expect you're wondering what Sony and Nintendo are doing about this. Well, Nintendo has poked a tiny mouse-like foot in the door with Phantasy Star Online for GameCube, to be published by Infogrames. This isn't really a broadband story as much as just another version of an ageing (though still terrific) Dreamcast game, playable on a standard dial-up account.

So hurrah for Nintendo. But it's Sony that we're most worried about. The existing console games overlord seems content to give Microsoft the freedom of the field. PS2 online, in Europe at least, is left simmering in the pot while Xbox blazes the trail.

Over the page we look at Nintendo and Sony's situation with broadband. Starting here though, it could be time to make way for a new king.

THE LIVE EXPERIENCE

We put our reputation on the line and jumped in a few Live games, to meet the people, you understand. Not telling you our ID just yet. We're playing it sneaky, see...

NFL FEVER

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT

Remember John Madden '92 on the Mega Drive, watching C4 for clues? Now we can hook up with guys in the US for tuition. Bora, a Puerto Rican, was our guide. "My wife is here, she's calling all the plays and I play 'em. She's my coach. Actually I play amateur football in the park." Bora destroyed us. But wait till next time!

WHACKED (Free demo with LIVE)

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT

We joined with a couple in Japan, plus a young US kid. The Japanese guys spoke little English, but were friendly and fun. The kid was hell bent on making us suffer! You need to play Whacked at least once to appreciate the madness. We quit when the kid switched on the Male Robot voice and repeatedly asked, "Are you Elvis?"

UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES

Radeon 9700 (in reality Angel Rossdale, 19, Texas) was up at 04:15 playing UC, after playing Unreal all night on PC. We asked him what he thought. "It's okay. Live, I mean. Unreal is okay too. I really want Nintendo to do something like this, though. Metroid online... I would *love* that." We hear you, brother.

MOTO GP (Free demo with LIVE)

PUBLISHER: THQ

A bunch of unemployed Brits were hogging the hogs on this server. Hear this: 'five minutes' on Live will in fact put you out of action for hours. Moto GP is the classic easy-to-pick-up, impossible-to-give-up game, seemingly geared to destroying all spare minutes. While picking ourselves up after a wreck, we asked what was so appealing here. "Dunno really", was the reply. Okay.

MECH ASSAULT

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT

Honestly, we usually think stuff like this is dull. Live made a heck of a difference, though. People didn't talk much; too busy concentrating on stealing weapons from exploded mechs. Occasionally somebody would apologise, "Oops, you're on my team." Still, the smoky battlefield took on a new meaning when you accepted that everyone out there is real. Live, it seems, can make a game.

XBOX LIVE!

Starting on March 14 you can pick up an Xbox Live kit from the high street for slightly less than £40. Staring at the shelf wondering which game to buy next, your eyes are drawn to Xbox Live along with everything else. It's a new temptation, and CVG has been revelling in it.

Getting set up for Xbox Live is really simple, though only if you already have a broadband connection at home.

There's just a CD, headset and memory card in the Starter Kit. The CD configures your 'box for Live. The memory card stores all your account information, including your permanent Live ID. Finally, the headset is the ultimate weapon for put-downs and jeers – or cheery hellos and encouraging remarks.

GOING LIVE!

Joining a Live game is simple. Any game that supports Live has an Xbox Live option that you select like any other game mode. Once you've opted for Live, five options appear. These are common to all Live-enabled games. 'Quick Match' selects an available game at random. 'Optimatch' lets you set parameters for the game, eg time limit, difficulty, number of players, and so on. 'Host Game'... you're in charge of the game. 'Friends' and 'Stats' we'll explain in a bit more detail, because they say a lot about Xbox Live.

The Friends thing allows you to set up a list of people you choose to hang out with online. If you know a person's Live nickname, add it to your list. You can invite friends or exclude them, send and receive messages.

But the greatest Friends feature is the ability to issue or respond to invitations to join games, whether you're playing the same one or not. For example, you could be playing Unreal Championship and an invite shows up for your services in NFL Fever. Having accepted, all you need do is remove the UC disc, replace it with the NFL disc then follow the prompts that take you to where your friend is waiting on Live. It's so simple, it really is.

Lastly, Stats. One reason your Live nickname cannot be changed is that Live keeps track of your performance in every game you play. Forever. Maybe God will want to ask you about it, it's that serious. Some of you will check your Stats regularly because you fancy your skills. Others will eventually shy away because it shows you up for what you really are – a gaming disaster! Whatever, it's the first time in any meaningful context that your ability as a gamer is broadcast globally*. Yikes!

WHAT'S NOW

FROM TODAY, HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN GO OUT AND BUY THAT'S LIVE ENABLED

- *Capcom Versus SNK EO*
- *Ghost Recon*
- *Mech Assault*
- *Moto GP*
- *MX Superfly*
- *NFL Fever 2003*
- *Splinter Cell*
- *ToeJam & Earl 3*
- *Unreal Championship*
- *Whacked*

WHAT'S SOON

SOME DREAM GAMES DUE LATER THIS YEAR. HALO 2, GUYS! CAN HARDLY WAIT...

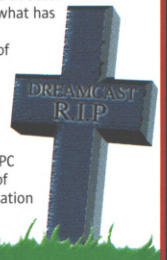
- *Counter Strike (Christmas)*
- *Halo 2 (Christmas)*
- *Project Gotham 2 (Christmas)*
- *Midtown Madness 3 (June)*
- *Moto GP 2 (May)*
- *Phantasy Star Online (TBC)*
- *Return to Castle Wolfenstein:*
- *Tides of War (May)*
- *Star Wars Galaxies (Summer)*

VERSUS THE DC AND PC EXPERIENCE

Online gaming has been happening for years now. Clans of players are already hooked on first-person-shooters, while others are lost to massively-multiplayer-online-RPGs via their PCs and more recently Dreamcast.

A fair number of these people are already doing this via a BB connection, especially in the US. But until now there hasn't been a quality standard to rely on. Servers catering to PC players are still splintered across a confusing array choices, where smaller amateur organisations often do the job better than the supposed professional ones. It's up to you to find the best ones. As for Dreamcast and its plucky 33k modem, when it came to playing the likes of Quake it was only ever a poor-man's PC at best.

We think Xbox Live is hugely different to what has gone before, and you should take notice. The revolution that it brings is all about the style of service; how it connects console players across the world in such an easy-to-understand format. Instead of many different services charging separate fees to be included in a useful hub, there's just the one. The ability to plug and play, long a dream for PC owners, is here at last. Above all, the appeal of Xbox Live lies in how easy it makes communication with other players so you can share the fun.



GOOD IF YOU CAN GET IT

Your major obstacle to going Xbox Live is, of course, getting broadband in the first place. We can't help thinking that this is a big financial ask by most people's standards, and impossible to ignore.

Without going into all the boring details, you're looking at a monthly bill of around £30, whichever ISP you choose to go with, a pretty hefty whack when you tot it up over a year. At the moment you also need to have a Mac or PC at home to get a broadband account – it's not possible to set up otherwise.

Your first payout is the Live kit itself. On top of that you will eventually be required to pay a subscription fee to Xbox Live (after your free 12 months are up), plus individual fees to the games publishers for their exclusive content. All things considered, broadband gaming doesn't come cheap.

* Yes, we know all about the various PC groups out there, but that's small potatoes to Live's heaving marrow of a community

DOU SHITAN DESUKA ONLINE PS2 IN JAPAN

While PS2 gamers in the UK wait for Sony's online vision to take shape, gamers in Japan are already living it. And what a lonely life it is.

Online PS2 gaming began in Japan with USB modems and minimal support. Sony eventually got around to releasing its broadband adaptor last April to accompany the release of Final Fantasy XI, but to this day the device is only available in a 18,000 yen (approx. £95) bundle with the PS2 hard disk, and can only be obtained online through an internet service provider.

Broadband is one of the most heavily advertised products in the country, and most providers give the PS2 bundle exposure, but this limited distribution hasn't served the PS2 online cause one bit. Online support through Sony's adaptor has also been low up to this point. Months after FFXI, Capcom's racing game Auto Modellista went online – but only through the narrowband USB modem route.

Aside from the occasional slip-up, though, Sony Japan seems to be de-emphasising narrowband. Gamers can play FFXI through a narrowband USB modem (although the hard disk is still required), but lengthy downloads of over an hour to merely get the game up and running, combined with Japan's pay-per-minute phone system, make this an extreme option.

Sony Europe will be taking an approach more akin to Sony America's, offering up the network adaptor (although broadband only) separate from the hard disk. The results speak for themselves. Compared to its Japanese counterpart, the US device has made it into the hands of almost three times as many users in less than half the time.

Summon Guardians. Impress your mates

My Guardian's bigger than yours, hah

FFXI

Online PS2's killer app is still Final Fantasy XI. While initially seeming something of a disappointment, the game has at last managed to sell 200,000 copies and now features over 50,000 active users, from which 12,000 or so can be found playing the game every day. We presume this will grow when the game's first expansion, Vision of Ziraat, sees release in May.

THE FLOOD

New online titles that make use of Sony's broadband adaptor have begun trickling out. Koei is currently in beta testing for a massively multiplayer role-player based on the Nobunaga's Ambition series that, like FFXI, requires both the hard disk and broadband adaptor. Other games, including Namco's Venus & Braves Online/Offline RPG, SCE's Minna No Golf (Everybody's Golf in the UK) Online and Capcom's upcoming Online Resident Evil don't require the hard disk, but do make use of Sony's network adaptor.

We hope Resi online is more exciting than it is here...

THE LARGER PICTURE

In the end, Sony's online plans go far beyond games. Each revision of the startup software that powers the network-ready PS2 has seen updates in decidedly non-gaming areas, such as burnable music and photo storage. Sony's plans for downloadable music and movies in future updates suggest that these early online days of the PlayStation brand could be providing a mere glimpse at the Sony Group's future. **Anoop Gantayat**

NO NEWS GOOD NEWS FROM SONY?

Not a lot happening in the UK for the foreseeable future with PS2 online.

Last official word CVG got was that there would be a Broadband Gaming Pack available in spring, costing £44.99. This gets you a PS2 Ethernet Adaptor, a start-up disc of online games coming soon and one free game.

This month reliable sources have told us that Sony's broadband campaign could be put back to September.

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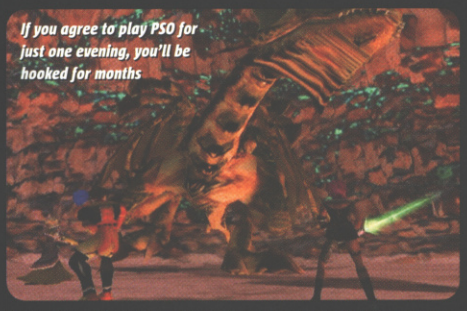
CUBE-SHAPED PHANTASY

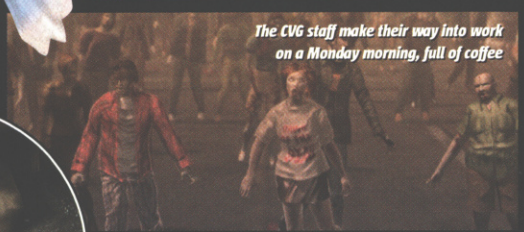


If you agree to play PSO for just one evening, you'll be hooked for months

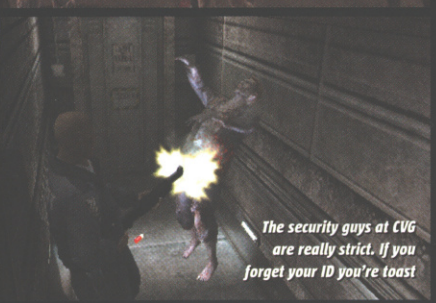
If you own a GC, you're not entirely left out of the broadband party. Phantasy Star Online is now playable via broadband adaptor or standard modem, both available for £34.99. As we've said, broadband isn't necessary because the game runs fine on a modem. We're yet to learn of an online Cube game that will depend entirely on broadband.

The Cube version of PSO is officially known as Episode I & II. Episode I is exactly what Dreamcast owners have been enjoying for the past year. Part II is the thing to be excited about, an all-new adventure set on an island, promised to be very tough. There is a subscription charge of £5.99 for 30 days, with the first 30 days free. Check out www.sega.net or www.playsega.com for more information.

Hardly a gobsmacking introduction to online gaming from Nintendo, then, but we didn't expect anything more. If Nintendo does have anything radical planned, we'll expect to see the first glimpse at the E3 show in May – and you'll read about it in CVG, of course.



The CVG staff make their way into work on a Monday morning, full of coffee



The security guys at CVG are really strict. If you forget your ID you're toast

Since Sony's UK office didn't even want to comment, we're not sure how much truth there is to the rumour. If it holds out, though, we reckon Sony sees it as a strategic move, buying more time to launch with something impressive – which it hasn't managed to do so far in the States (see right).

To make up for the lack of hands-on experience this side of the pond, CVG got in touch with our friends overseas to find out how PS2 broadband is shaping up in the US and Japan. We will have more concrete info on Sony's UK online plans next issue.

YO, WASSAP AMERICA ONLINE PS2 IN THE US

Nearly two years after the launch of the PlayStation 2, Sony got into the online fray with the PS2 Network Adaptor on 27 August 2002.

Carrying a $39.99 (approx. £25) price tag, the adaptor easily connects to the net via the user's broadband or dial-up ISP, eschewing an Xbox Live-style monthly service fee. But play servers are run by publishers, allowing those companies to control pricing; Everquest will require a $9.99 monthly charge and other games may follow suit.

While additional hardware is unnecessary, Sony has labelled the adaptor 'HDD' to indicate compatibility with the as-yet unavailable PS2 hard drive. Hints about downloadable content have been dropped, but the current setup only allows players to connect online.

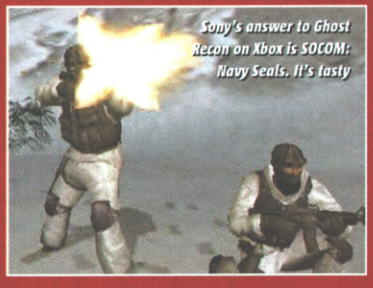
Sony shipped 24,000 units at launch and claims twice that sold to date; while there haven't been the Tokyo-style jumbo queues, retailers have seen steady demand for the device.

However, the Network Adaptor is not yet viewed as an essential bit of kit, perhaps because it has yet to be paired with a must-have title. With Everquest Online Adventures and Final Fantasy XI still on the horizon, Sony is developing its online base slowly, hoping for a grassroots miracle to transpire.

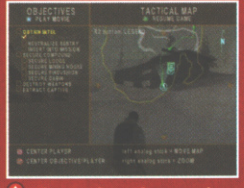
Give your life to EverQuest. There is no other way

POTENTIAL KILLER APPS

Without a massively multiplayer title to sway consumers, Sony ceded the role of the network adaptor's killer app in the States to SOCOM: U.S. Navy Seals. Bundled with a voice headset that lets players moonlight as telemarketers, the talky shooter generated some excitement, although it garnered only above-average reviews. Copping from the popular Half-Life mod Counterstrike, SOCOM's one-shot kills and lack of in-game re-spawn translated to less participation and more voyeurism, which hasn't impressed all those console gamers looking for more visceral thrills...


Sony's answer to Ghost Recon on Xbox is SOCOM: Navy Seals. It's tasty

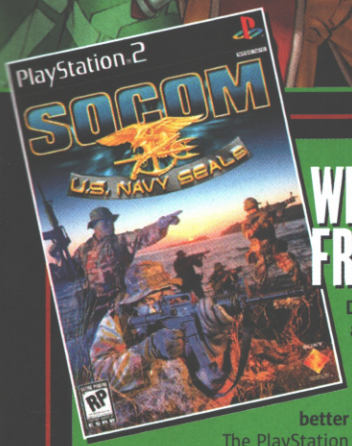
It's okay, they're not really dead. These same guys will be back next game



When you know the enemy is real, stealth becomes more fun

Gaming online means friends can help with tough objectives

Somewhere in this freezing land your mates are waiting to get you



WHAT'S THE FREQUENCY?

Despite Sony's admirable support of dial-up, it's apparent that higher bandwidth equals a better experience.

The PlayStation 2 has already seen broadband-only games (SOCOM, ironically) and will inevitably see more. Currently 26 per cent of the US has broadband (6 per cent in the UK), so it's likely that Sony is trying to lure dial-up users who may be future broadband clients.

But with only three per cent of the 15 million PS2 owners in the US playing online at all, it's got a long way to go yet. **Alex Pullman**

RAW IS MORE!

DELVING BENEATH THE SPANDEX OF WWE RAW 2: RUTHLESS AGGRESSION ON XBOX

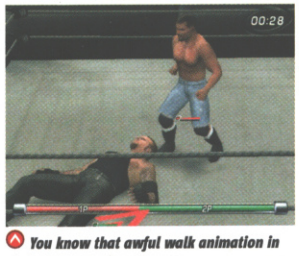
FIRST LOOK!

IN BRIEFS

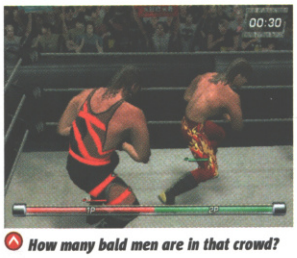
This is a sequel that aims to rectify the faults of the original Raw on Xbox.

We're promised an updated roster of superstars, enhanced gameplay and control, a wider variety of match options, a season mode and perhaps best of all, the ability to rip tunes to the hard drive to be used as entrance music!

Did anyone ever tell him yellow isn't very mean?



You know that awful walk animation in Raw 1? Thankfully, they now walk upright!



How many bald men are in that crowd?

That Jamie Noble is up to something very underhanded!

Looks like Undertaker's stepped on a thumb tack. Bad luck, mate

On its own merits the original WWE Raw for Xbox could be best described as a start. It may not have been a favourable one, but at least it was there. The title had a number of flaws and when compared to the PS2's SmackDown! titles, these become more apparent.

However, we're not here to discuss Raw's faults, we're here to bring you a first look at the forthcoming sequel that aims to put them to rights. We spent a couple of hours with an early version of Raw 2 and even at this stage we can safely say that it's going to be a much better game than its parent.

Eddie helps Kane remove a piece of chicken bone

TELL ME MORE... BROTHER!

Upon loading, the first thing we noticed about Raw 2: Ruthless Aggression was the expanded selection of match types. We spotted Normal, Hardcore, Streetfight, Ladder, Table, TLC, Battle Royal, Cage and Hell in a Cell. On top of that there are sub-options, such as Triple Threat, Fatal 4-Way, 1 Vs 3 and 2 Vs 2 Vs 2 Tornado Tag, within each match so you can decide the number of participants. So far, that's a vast improvement.

In the ring there's a number of improvements. Momentum doesn't swing back and forth as quickly as before. Also, you can now use finishing moves at any time during a bout. However, the momentum meter determines the efficacy of a finisher. If you're not on top during a match, there's no point in hitting the finisher as you'll only inflict more damage if you have the momentum.

A smaller addition, but an equally welcome one, is that the wrestlers now visibly express pain on their faces, something that's most noticeable

Choose to interact in each match in Season mode

OUT BACK

Unlike the SmackDown! series over on the PlayStation, the original Raw featured no backstage areas.

Well, that's about to change. Confirmed for Raw 2 are a locker room, interview area and hallway. That's only three locations so far, but we've been told that more backstage areas may be added before release. We certainly hope so!

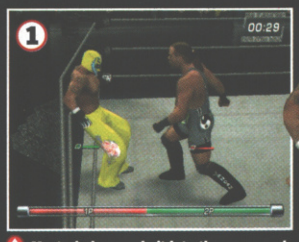
Kane and Goldust chat as they limber up in the locker room before a match

Something Kane's said has upset Goldie. Question is, will they take it to the ring?

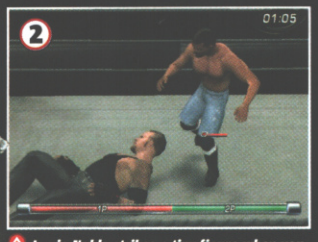
MYSTERIO? YES-A-ROONIE!

Raw 2 boasts a vastly expanded roster of superstars, with the promise that this will be kept as current as possible when the game hits the stores.

New additions include Rey Mysterio and Jamie Noble, plus there are more women than we've ever seen in a wrestling game, including new faces Nidia and Victoria. A number of returning superstars will also receive overhauls. The most noticeable of these so far is Kane sporting his latest outfit and mask.



Mysterio has made it into the game and already he's looking awesome



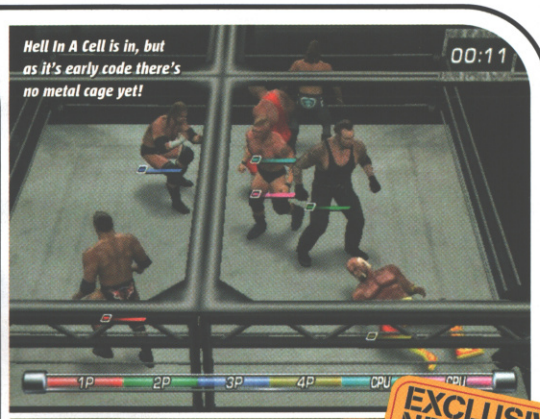
Jamie Noble strikes a tiny figure when you compare him to the Undertaker

when you're locking on a submission move such as the Y2J's Walls of Jericho.

HELL, YEAH!

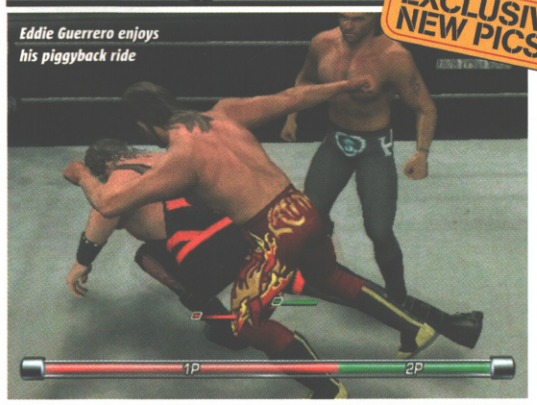
Raw 2's unique season mode should be something special. Apparently it won't be as scripted as the SmackDown! season mode. Instead, all the events will be determined by your actions, especially those outside of a match you're actively participating in. For instance, you can interfere in opponents' matches, steal items or encourage another wrestler. These decisions influence how the crowd and other wrestlers perceive you, with the branching consequences almost limitless.

Finally, we've just got space to say that one of the most requested features for the original Raw is present in Raw 2. Yes, CD ripping is in: you can copy tracks onto the hard drive for unique wrestler entrances! We're keeping a close eye on this one for sure.

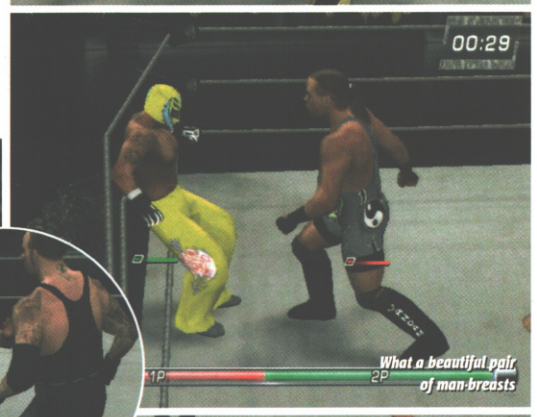


Hell In A Cell is in, but as it's early code there's no metal cage yet!

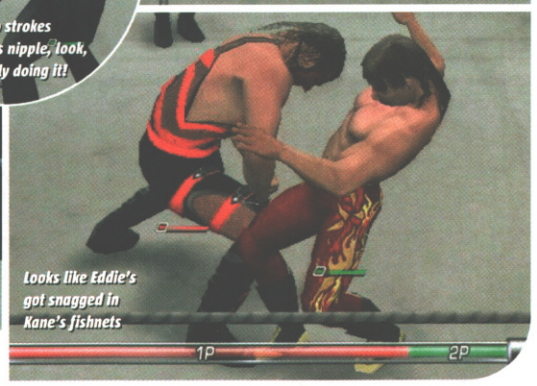
EXCLUSIVE NEW PICS



Eddie Guerrero enjoys his piggyback ride

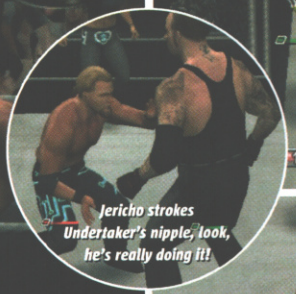


What a beautiful pair of man-breasts



Looks like Eddie's got snagged in Kane's fishnets

Notice the grimace on Jericho's face? It's another new feature



Jericho strokes Undertaker's nipple, look, he's really doing it!

It's such a friendly game, they just hug each other all the time

Undertaker admires Y2J's boots

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Raw 2 really hits the mark with its expanded list of match types, season Mode – and it features Rey Mysterio! In terms of features, Raw 2 is already a vast improvement over the original (despite the lack of play-by-play commentary). Fingers crossed we'll be getting to grips with more completed code soon, so we can give you the full lowdown.

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METROID PRIME

NINTENDO GAMECUBE™

"Worth buying a GameCube for alone."
GAMES™ 10/10

"Metroid Prime is simply a fabulous gaming experience and the best game on the Cube."
GAMESMASTER 96%

"The best game on GameCube, and a title that stands among the world's finest ever."
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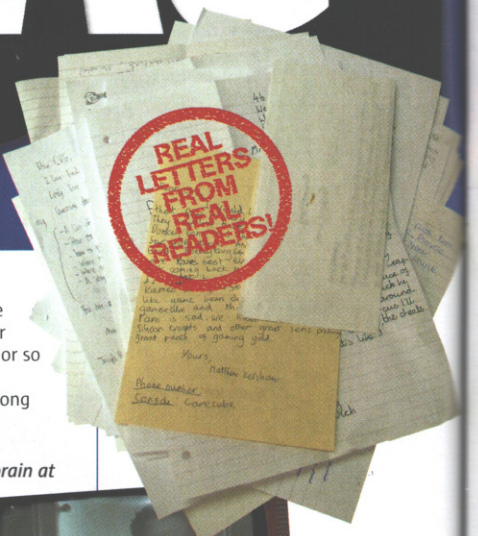


CVG'S SPONSOR-A-READER

Some of you lot write into CVG maybe once a month. Others might even drop a line every couple of weeks, just to get something off their chest. Then there's the kind of kid who finds it impossible to talk to his mates, so blitzes us with mail like some kind of cyberstalker. But rather than shun them and tell them to never darken our door again, we're gonna make them heroes. Take Spider, for example. He wrote to us SEVEN TIMES in less than a month. Here are just some of his ramblings...

While hunting my attic last night I came across some old Mega Drive games and was looking through the vast amounts of games that I feel *made* genres for games nowadays. I found Streets Of Rage, Paper Boy (do you remember it?), California Games and many more. I feel these games are some of the best, because they helped make the games for today.

Spider

I been reading your mag for almost two and a half years (not long compared to some people) but I have noticed something about it – it's changed images about four times. I think the newest image is the best you've had and you should keep it. It has the best design and is easy to read.

Spider

Does experience come with age? Or can anyone of any age be a good, experienced gamer?

Spider

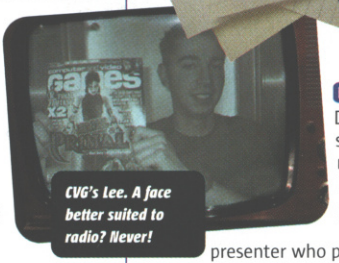
CVG *Spider receives a CVG T-shirt for his efforts. But we reckon that's just the start of it all. Reckon you can mail us more times, and have more interesting stuff to say? If you can, we'll slap a CVG T-shirt on your back, just to say thanks for supporting your fave games mag month after month. Ahh.*

SHENMUE WHO?

I think it's stupid how Sega has released Shenmue II for Xbox. The plot follows directly on from Shenmue which isn't out for Xbox. Does this mean they're going to release Shenmue for Xbox, or just leave the three or so Xbox owners in this country wondering how Ryo got to Hong Kong in the first place?

Michael Bradley

CVG *Some Mekon superbrain at Microsoft has already thought of this problem, Mike, and has come up with a simple solution – you get a free circus dwarf with each copy of Shenmue II on Xbox, and using mime they'll act out the story of the first game. Simple but very, very clever.*



CVG's Lee. A face better suited to radio? Never!

A LADYBOY WRITES...

Rargh Tamlin here again. This isn't a letter concerning me being termed an abhorrent freak of nature, I've heard that all before. Instead, I thought it would be a great idea to tell you that 'Tamlin' is actually a male name, taken from the old Scottish tale of Tam Lin. It's a poncey story about a baby being kidnapped, so I won't really go into it. I'm all man, though, I can assure you. Just take a look at these manly pecs!

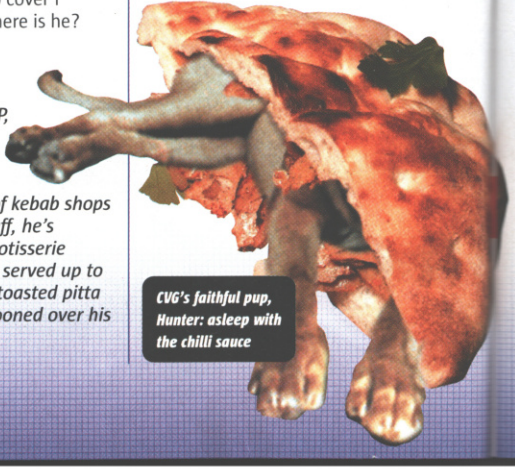
CVG *All man, huh? Is that why you put a kiss at the end of your letter? And we know you're wearing a trainer bra underneath your T-shirt...*

PRAY FOR HUNTER

Hey CVG, I've been reading your mag for a year now and I want you to know I love it. But when I got the March issue and read it cover to cover I couldn't find Hunter! Where is he?

Sean Blinkhorn

CVG *We booted the little mutt out cos he chewed up Mike's GBA SP, deleting his Zelda saves in the process. Haven't seen him since but judging by the number of kebab shops there are round CVG's gaff, he's probably spinning on a rotisserie somewhere, about to be served up to the post-pub crowd in a toasted pitta and have chilli sauce spooned over his chargrilled ass.*



CVG's faithful pup, Hunter: asleep with the chilli sauce

CVG TV

Don't get me started on the new TV show Lan Jam. Have you seen it? There's a presenter who probably thinks the Game Boy is made by Sony.

Come on! We want people who have calluses on their thumbs from playing too much Street Fighter, people who can shoot a flea off a dog's back half a mile away because of excessive Time Crisis, and gamers with communication skills to rival CVG's! I mean, what an idea! Gaming skills plus knowledge plus communication skills... Hmmm, why don't you guys do a show? We don't want no childish crap, we just want to know. Simple as that. A few good reviews, previews, footage not shown at a ridiculous hour. When the masses start knowing which games are good and which games aren't, developers will start getting worried.

Wai Chiu Yip, Leeds

CVG *When the masses start knowing which games are good and which are not? Here are three letters for you: C. V. G. We review every new*

CVG STINKER

CONSOLE CONFUSION

There has been so much confusion over whether there are any more consoles coming out. I think all of us gamers would like to know if there are any more machines coming out. And what will the price be? And can we see any improvements on the ones we've got?

Andrew

Good job you wrote in, Andrew, cos we've just had the latest specs on hot new consoles coming your way. Sony is working on the PlayStation MEGA-X, which hits the shops a week after you read this. It'll be more powerful than a NASA supercomputer and you'll control the games using your mind rather than a joypad. Microsoft is putting the finishing touches to its X-Continent, a console the size of Asia that plays games that come on CDs the size of Belgium. And Nintendo? It's re-releasing the Game & Watch. Hope that clears things up.

The next next-gen consoles will be huge. Believe

game each month, so you know exactly where to spend your cash. So there's nothing revolutionary in your idea, is there? But CVG TV – that's a great idea. In fact it's something that almost took off, but fell through at the last minute because we're all so hideously ugly. Instead we're working on a radio show, so you never have to see our mugs again.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

I'm a big fan of CVG, so much so that it inspired me to make my own online mag. At first it started out okay – I had lots of ideas and stuff. But then when I looked back over your mags I realised you had lots of screens, prizes and previews. I want to know: just where do you get all these things? I have searched the Internet for hours but I can only find old news. Also could you give me some tips about the layout and stuff? Thanks.

Andy

CVG *And I suppose you want us to write it all for you too, huh? For chrissakes, that's like Colonel Sanders giving away his secret recipe for KFC, or Mr Kipling baking cakes for someone else. Nice try, mate, but we can't give away the recipe that makes us so goddam hot.*

VILE BOY

Hi! Have you noticed that if you rearrange the letters of Xbox Live, it spells Vile Xbox, which is exactly what the machine looks like?

Tim Gambrill, Fareham

NINTENDO LOVES US!

The American and Japanese versions of Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker come with a copy of the N64's Ocarina Of Time. Will the English version feature this too?

Liam Parkinson

CVG *Yup, the UK version of Wind Waker will come with the bonus Ocarina disc. And better still, you don't have to pre-order to get a copy. Numbers will be limited, though, so make sure you get yours in early.*

YADDA YADDA YADDA

According to the front of issue 257 March Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution is "Namco's bare-fist fighter". Do Sega know about this!?! Do I win a prize for spotting the mistake?

Mark

We are so so so so so sorry, Sega. Fawn Fawn crawl crawl bum lick bum lick. You give us a world exclusive first look at Virtual Fighter 4 Evolution and we attribute the game ON THE FRONT COVER, no less, to your biggest rivals. I for one would love to be in your office when you make the real apology.

Mark

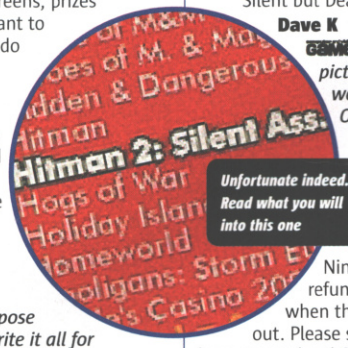
CVG *I'm really sorry for being a smug little git who is so desperate for free stuff I have write into a magazine and being a complete tit. I just cannot help it, and most of the time I don't even get anything out of it.*
P.S. I fancy you, mum.

GUFF-AW

Hi, just thought I'd send you this hilarious scan of something that was on the back page of your mag. Brings a whole new meaning to the phrase 'Silent but Deadly'.

Dave K

CVG *Sometimes pictures say a thousand words. This says two: Oh. Dear.*



HANDHELD HEIST

Just writing to ask if you know if Nintendo is doing refunds on the old GBAs when the SP version comes out. Please say they will because my local GAME won't accept them as a part-exchange. And if Nintendo don't, do you think it's worth forking out another £80 for the SP and its 'new' features? Thanks for your help and the great mag. Keep up the good work.

Mohammed Rizwan

CVG *Bad news. Nintendo has no plans whatsoever to offer any kind of refund or part-exchange, so if you want an SP you'll have to fork out for the whole lot. But you can play it in the dark, or even in a poorly lit room, without having a torch strapped to the side of your head. Surely it's worth it for that alone?*

A FOOTBALLING LEGEND

I am a great fan of your mag and own a GBA and a PS2 and am a huge fan of PES2. So I was well chuffed when you announced a national championship! However, it never came to my town, Huddersfield (we are the largest town in England!). Next year maybe the format should be bigger to accommodate more of the players who want to give it a shot by letting more towns participate. Our town is a great footballing town – we're currently stuck at the bottom of division 2!

Zola

CVG *We're working on another footie tour of the UK, but you'll have to wait for the details. In the meantime did you get down to GAME to challenge CVG's Pro Evo Champion, David? If not, you missed out on winning hard cash.*

FIND ME A GIRLFRIEND

First of all I'd like to congratulate you on your great mag. I've been obsessed with videogames and CVG for as long as I can remember. Anyway, I am studying in Athens and the videogames ban is not completely over! Sure, we have no problem buying or renting console and PC games, but there are no arcade machines in sight! Most arcades have become net-cafes, or just have pool tables – or both. But I can't seem to come across an arcade machine, not even a retro one!

George

P.S. Where is Georgina Kyriacou, your production editor, from? Can I have her email?

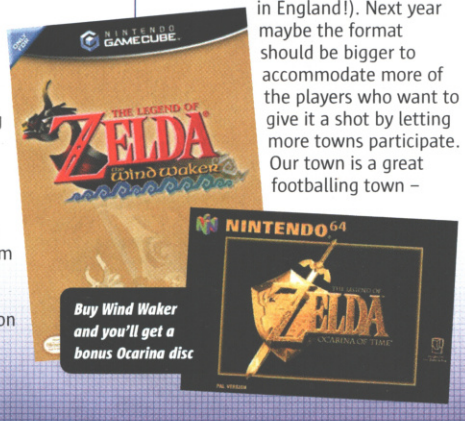
CVG *Call us cynical but that last bit of your letter smacks of you being a stalker. And funnily enough, we don't dig stalkers on CVG so no, you can't have her email. Why don't you go down to the arcades and get rid of your lust on Super Girlfriend Finder II. Oh, sorry, you can't...*

ARCADE HEAVEN

Hello! I've seen in some shots in your mag of you using weird boxes to play games that aren't out yet, like Soul Calibur II, for instance. Is it some kind of arcade machine in a box, or a super hybrid console?

Marc Long

CVG *That box is a SuperGun, Marc, and it's exactly what you said it is – an arcade machine in a box. It costs around £180 and we got ours from Arcade Heaven. It's the games that will set you back a hefty whack, though – the Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution arcade board we had cost a massive £2000!*



STAR LETTER

WHAT DO YOU DO IF...

Everyone always comments on the Xbox's size, on the size of its controllers. But imagine the situation: it's late at night, you're all alone in bed and all of a sudden a stranger smashes through your window with a knife. What do you do? Consider the following:

A: You grab your GameCube and swing it around like a handbag, then with a gentle 'phut' you tap it on you enemy's head. But he's not hurt by your purple gaming purse, and puts the knife to your neck. You reach out for your controller to use the cord to strangle him, but it's a Wavebird! Tough luck, mate...

B: You jump up and go to grab your PlayStation 2, but the collection of useless add-ons gets in the way. You carefully unplug the monstrous and elaborately large controller connectors but it's too late... Never mind, even if you could get it out, it's full of hollow holes so it's nowhere near heavy enough to knock your opponent out.

X: You jump up and pull your Xbox from the wall. The clever controller releases pop the pad out quickly and easily and smash your faithful Xbox over the bad guy's head. He gets dazed so you hit him again. He passes out in a pool of congealing blood and the sturdy Xbox is intact. You then get the controllers and use the extra long leads to tie him up on the floor, and shove another controller in his mouth, with an S-Controller up his backside. All is well.

I hope that shuts up the purple-handled Cube owners and the "We'll get an add-on soon" PS2 fan boys once and for all...

Matthew Waite

JOYTECH

Each month's star letter-writer gets a bundle of quality peripherals from JOYTECH, so make sure you mark your name and address clearly.

SILENT HILL® 3

PUBLISHER
KONAMI
DEVELOPER
KONAMI
OUT: MAY 23

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

The third instalment in the most disturbing PS2 game ever boasts just as many sick shocks, gross-out set pieces and slithering, slathering enemies as its forebears. Prepare for that terrified excitement... again.

WWW.KONAMI.COM

She's just a girl. A fragile, pale girl, stumbling all alone through some sort of decaying amusement park. There's a strange, thick, foul-smelling fog swirling in her face, clouding her eyes, clogging her throat. Who is she? Why is she here?

She doesn't even know herself. She feels the cold steel of a knife pressing into her right hand. It appals and comforts her at the same time. Through the foggy haze she makes out a soft pink shape. It's a cute toy bunny, the type you'd find at any fairground. Except this bunny is savagely mutilated and daubed with fresh blood.

There are other menacing shapes looming, but she daren't look. She's trapped – wandering, exploring abandoned shops selling innocent seaside treats gone horribly wrong. Vile creatures strike out at her from the shadows, unholy monstrosities with marbleised membranes stretched taut across their obscene, pulsating limbs. She slashes out and runs, ending up on a roller coaster, plummeting to her death.

Suddenly, blinding daylight and soft music. The pretty girl wakes up in the cosy familiar surroundings of Happy Burger. It was all just a horrible nightmare. She laughs, free to

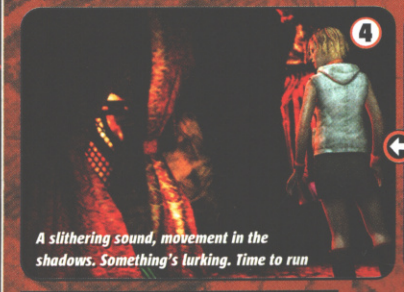
LAKESIDE AMUSEMENT PARK

From the very moment you set foot in the abandoned amusement park at the start of the game, a familiar feeling of nausea and dread hits the pit of your stomach. We can guarantee you will never look at candy floss and big dippers in quite the same way again.

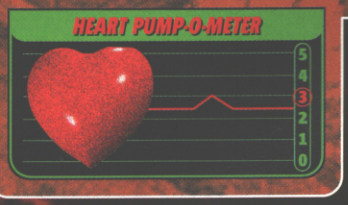
Entranced, Heather gazes up at the bright lights of the carousel

Up close, the horses grin wickedly, their paint glistening like blood

She wants to touch, but dares not. Is it blood, flesh, or something worse?



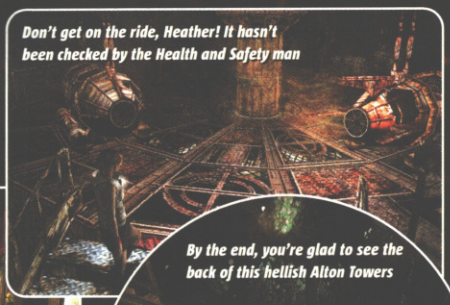
A slithering sound, movement in the shadows. Something's lurking. Time to run

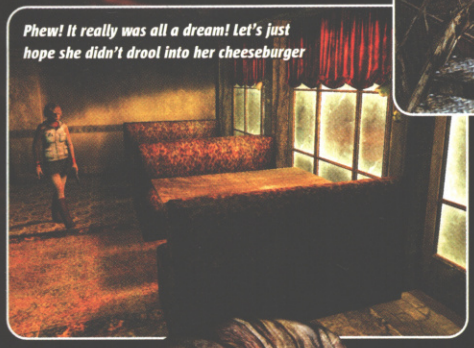


Dead-dog-flavour ice cream? Strangely, we're not tempted

Hardly what you want to see at a funfair. Unless you're Casey Chaos

Heather fails to appreciate the ironic humour of the Haunted Mansion attraction


Don't get on the ride, Heather! It hasn't been checked by the Health and Safety man


Phew! It really was all a dream! Let's just hope she didn't drool into her cheeseburger

By the end, you're glad to see the back of this hellish Alton Towers

We always knew there was something creepy about waxwork dummies

If the face is this bad, who the hell is going to want to look under the bandages?

Be aware that these things just don't give in. You have to stamp on them hard to make sure they're really dead

FAIRGROUND FRIGHTS

The bizarre Towering Closers and vile dogs with their faces split in two are the first of the gruesome Silent Hill 3 monsters that you have to fight with your tiny knife. If you're squeamish, now might be a good time to run away. Blood-curdling screams are optional.

HEATHER

Don't be fooled by the slight frame and nervous demeanour. Heather is a bit of a Buffy when it comes to fighting demons. She's scared at first, but once she gets her hands on some decent weaponry she's more than capable of stomping the squishy fiends into the dirt.

The character detail is stunning. You can even see Heather's freckles

continue her shopping without a worry or a care in the world...

JUST A DREAM?

But we know better than that, don't we? This is Silent Hill, after all. Young Heather is just the latest in a long line of tortured souls to be put through the ringer in the psycho-horror universe created by Konami's most creatively twisted minds.

CVG has had the chance to play Silent Hill 3 more than anyone else in the country and we can happily report that it's shaping up to be just as disturbing as the first two, possibly even more so due to the character of Heather. She's a lot more vulnerable and emotional than the rather dull James Sunderland from Silent Hill 2.

The stunning new graphics engine means that emotions such as pain, fear and revulsion are conveyed on Heather's highly expressive face with an impressive intensity. You care about this girl, you want to protect her, and you fear for her.

MALL RATS

While exploring the back alleys and maze-like corridors behind the shopping mall, Heather is shocked to bump into the Closer monster and Double-Head hounds, lifted straight from her nightmares and made flesh. She also gets to meet the bizarrely phallic Numb Bodies.

Distract the Double-Heads with a plate full of beef jerky so that you can run past

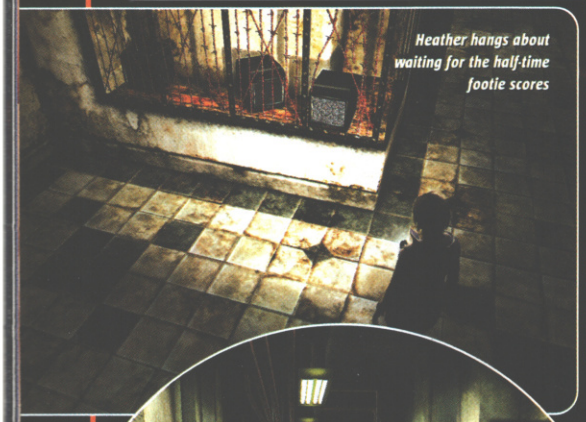
Numb-Bodies are easy to kill, but they thrash around and squeal like stuck pigs if you don't stamp on them quickly

SHOPPING MALL

The shopping mall where Heather wakes up after her bad dream is a comforting and familiar place. However, after a cheerful telephone conversation with her dad, Heather's happy mood is shattered by a strange man in a grubby overcoat who keeps hassling her. When she attempts to hide in the toilet things start to go very wrong.

It's sweet when restaurants remember little touches like napkins and pretty plates to go with the roast dog

The First Aid room in the shopping mall doesn't exactly inspire confidence. No one heard of sanitation around here?



Heather hangs about waiting for the half-time footie scores

Some parts of the mall are actually quite normal. Honest

Look closely and you can see Solid Snake hiding in the cardboard box

More gorgeous graphics. You can even read individual book titles

DOUGLAS

Douglas is the grubby, careworn detective who hassles Heather in the Shopping Mall. He has secrets to tell her about her birth, but she doesn't want anything to do with him. Judging on appearances, we can't blame her.

Douglas looks a right mess, like most of the folks in the crazy world of Silent Hill

RUN LIKE HELL

The interface and general mechanics of the gameplay will be very familiar to anyone who's played Silent Hill 2. Movement is very fluid, using the left analog stick to run and walk. X is your primary action button, used to examine and pick up objects. Press X when holding down the right shoulder button to fire guns or swing melée weapons. Triangle brings up a map of your current location, while Circle and Square are used for strafing left and right. Left shoulder button provides a look mode although you still can't zoom in on curious objects.

The Item screen is almost identical to how it was previously. Here you can check Heather's health, study Items and look at wonderfully detailed

SEWER

Once our heroine Heather leaves the relative tranquility and safety of the shopping mall and climbs down into the sewers beneath, the environments start to resemble far more the Silent Hill we've come to know and love (albeit in a hesitant, nauseating kinda way). Dirty, slimy and stinking, the sewers represent Heather leaving behind reality and descending deeper into the unknown.

Light at the end of the tunnel? Er, this is Silent Hill, remember? So no, probably not

Another fascinating entry in Heather's 'Sewer pipes of the world' notebook

Hardly the best time or place to be losing your contact lens

In the dank passages of the sewer system the lighting effects add to the menacing atmosphere

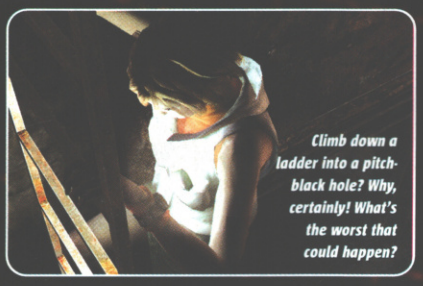
CLAUDIA

Uh-oh, it's another spooky Silent Hill nutter. The long-haired, ethereal Claudia is a ghostly, creepy woman who spooks Heather with her incoherent mutterings about her being "the one who will lead us to paradise with blood-stained hands". Right – cryptic, much?

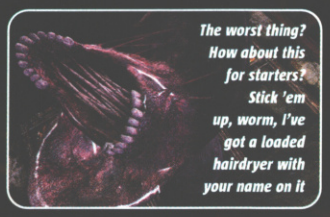
The weird Claudia seems like a right nutcase on the surface, but maybe she's genuinely trying to help Heather

SPLIT WORM

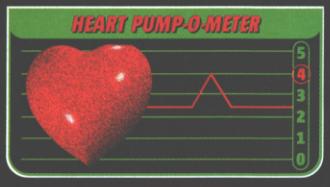
You're stuck in a sewer with a huge phallic worm looking alarmingly pleased to see you, and your pipsqueak handgun just ain't cutting the mustard. What to do now? Take that hairdryer you just happened to find lying around in a tunnel and use it to electrocute Mr Worm in his own love juice. Simple.



Climb down a ladder into a pitch-black hole? Why, certainly! What's the worst that could happen?



The worst thing? How about this for starters? Stick 'em up, worm, I've got a loaded hairdryer with your name on it



documents. The broken radio that crackles whenever monsters are near also makes a welcome reappearance alongside the torch.

From what we've seen so far, the actual gameplay follows previous patterns very closely. When Heather's shopping trip starts to melt into madness you're plunged straight into the thick of the action. Double-headed hounds start to gnaw at your feet with their revolting split faces flapping in the wind; you have to learn fast how to defend yourself.

BUT I ONLY WENT SHOPPING...

When you're not being savaged or clubbed or sucked by something loathsome, you're busy trying to find clues to just why the Mall has been overtaken by rampant hell-hounds and demons. There are the usual clever puzzles to solve, and once again you can set the puzzle difficulty level independently from the action difficulty levels, a real bonus if you're ace at killing but rusty in the brains department – or vice versa.

Most of the puzzles are logical and revolve around the continuing theme of survival, such as finding a screwdriver to open a stuck drawer in order to get a rope to use to climb down a lift shaft.

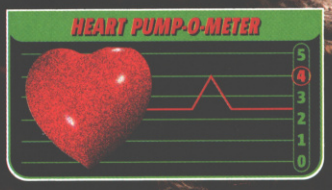
Visually, there's more light and shade than previously, which can only be a positive development. If you thought that the full impact of the first two games was somewhat marred by the unremittingly gloomy and fog-obscured environments, you'll be pleased to learn that much of the early action is set in brightly lit and superbly detailed environments.

However, as the plot progresses and the threads of Heather's normal existence start unravelling and morphing into the alternative reality of Otherworld, the familiar decaying environments that so characterised the first two games become more and more prevalent. You feel soiled, grimy, *tainted* somehow as you guide Heather through the hellish, crap-spattered rooms, trying to find out exactly why a sunny day at the shops has descended into such depravity.

STOP THE INSANITY

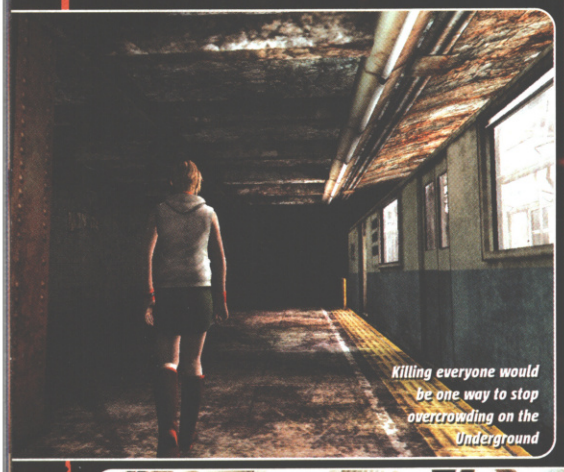
A few moments after finding a shotgun thoughtfully wrapped up in a box on a subway train, Heather bumps into the tastefully named Insane Cancer. Konami has been keeping him under wraps until now, but now you can feast your eyes on his cuddly, blubbery gorgeousness.

There's always some nutter next to you on the Tube



THE SUBWAY STATION

Those Konami guys certainly know how to mainline into our darkest fears. With the comforts of the mall now just a distant memory, Heather ends up in an abandoned subway station. Somehow she has to find a safe way out past the rotting corpses and graffiti. It's almost as bad as the Northern line.



Killing everyone would be one way to stop overcrowding on the Underground

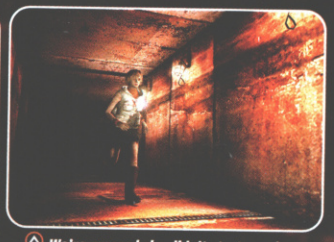
Documents you find in the game explain that Hazel St station is a well-known suicide spot

Character movement is so realistic that if Heather uses a large weapon like a Mace, she'll get breathless and have to rest

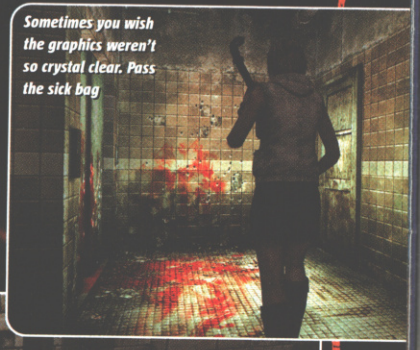
HILLTOP CENTRE

After the relentless horror of the sewer and the subway, the deceptively normal office block surroundings of Hilltop Centre come as a rather welcome relief. But not for long, mind. While there have been brief interludes up to this point, in which reality has morphed into the festering depravity of Otherworld, this is the first location where Heather actually becomes fully immersed in the terrifying dimensions of pure, Silent Hill hell. You have been warned.

The images are just as vile as anything the previous two games had to offer

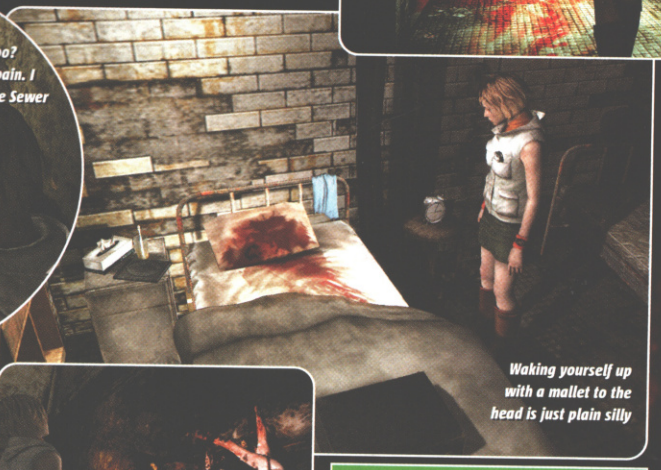


We're amazed she didn't start running sooner. But then Heather's no coward



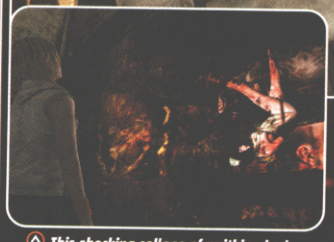
Sometimes you wish the graphics weren't so crystal clear. Pass the sick bag

Have you lost a contact lens too? It's such a pain. I lost one in the Sewer



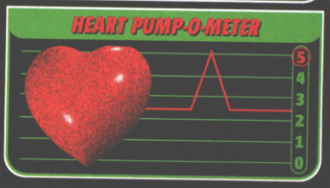
Waking yourself up with a mallet to the head is just plain silly

Even creatures from hell like looking up ladies' skirts



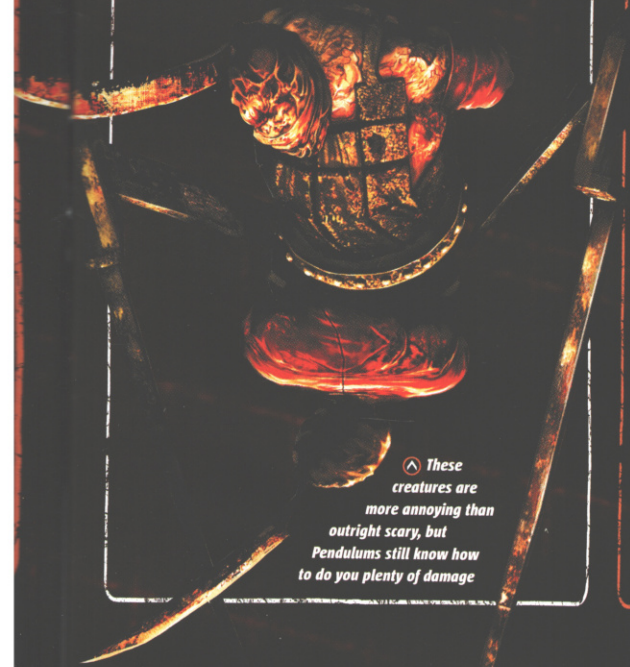
This shocking collage of writhing body parts is a truly disturbing sight

HEART PUMP-O-METER



PENDULUM

The bizarre-looking Pendulum monsters first start to appear when you reach the Hilltop Centre. These nasty insect-like creatures move very quickly and have a tendency to attack in swarms, making them difficult to hit.



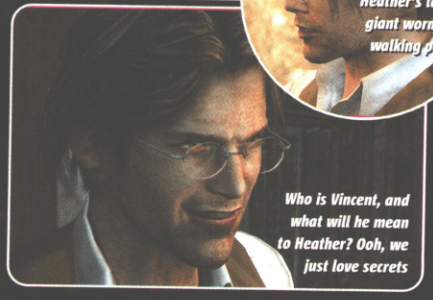
These creatures are more annoying than outright scary, but Pendulums still know how to do you plenty of damage

VINCENT

Most Silent Hill fanatics will probably have heard and seen pictures of Claudia, Heather and Douglas by now, but no one has seen or heard anything about a mysterious fourth character. Until this point. His name's Vincent, and this is what he looks like. But we can't tell you any more yet or our heads will be rolling around on the floor.

After all the horrors, Vincent looks relatively normal, even in his grandad waistcoat

Vincent listens aghast to Heather's tales of giant worms and walking penises



Who is Vincent, and what will he mean to Heather? Ooh, we just love secrets

We'd like to tell you more about the story and the startling plot twists that tie in with previous Silent Hill folklore, but Konami has threatened to chop off our heads if we reveal too much. What we can safely say is that through meeting the intriguing new characters described in these pages and uncovering clues amidst all the evil happenings, Heather learns more about Otherworld and just how snugly she and her family fit into the doomsday scenario.

Overall impressions are extremely positive. Silent Hill has always been the darker, scarred face of Survival Horror. While Resident Evil is more shlocky-horror than a glimpse of true evil, the Silent Hill universe is genuinely disturbing and unsettling. SH3 looks set to move the series on to new heights, presenting a thought-provoking, artistic, vicious and truly memorable adventure. We can't wait to see more. CVG

CVG OPINION

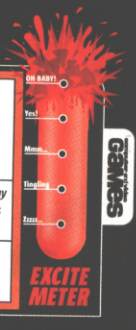
Playing Silent Hill 3 feels like dangling on the edge of Hell. It scares us, and it messes with our minds, but we can't stop thinking about it. **Maura**

WE LOVE

- Pretty girl instead of gloomy guy
- Terrifyingly grotesque creatures
- Twisted, dark, shock-laden plot

WE HATE

- The frustrating locked doors
- Playing it in the dark!



INCOMING

ACCESS ALL AREAS TO THE HOTTEST FORTHCOMING GAMES!

HOW CVG'S PREVIEWS WORK

ONLINE GAMING
Can you play the game online, against other gamers around the globe? Find out here

PUBLISHER, DEVELOPER AND RELEASE DATE
Who makes the game and when it's due out, to the best of CVG's knowledge

PLAYERS
How many people can play. If it's anything from one to 32, we'll put 32!

IN A NUTSHELL
A brief summary of what the game is like. If it's an update and CVG has already previewed it we'll also sum up stuff we've said before

FORMAT
The console we played the game on is highlighted red, but other formats it's coming out on are listed too!

WEBSITE
Want more info, more screens and to see it action? Visit this URL!

PUBLISHER
ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER
ACTIVISION
OUT: DECEMBER 25

ONLINE GAMING x16

IN A NUTSHELL

Hotly anticipated, super-realistic, sneaky covert-ops sequel to last year's first-person shooter. The team-orientated multiplayer mode encompasses a wide variety of objective-based missions.

GAMECUBE
XBOX
GBA

WWW.ACTIVISION.COM

THE BEST PICS
See exactly how good (or bad!) the game looks with CVG's sweet-as screenshots

INFO OVERLOAD!
What it's like to play, how it compares to other games and whether it's any good

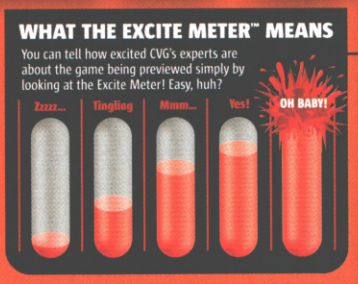
CVG OPINION
What we thought of the game, no matter what stage of development the game is at

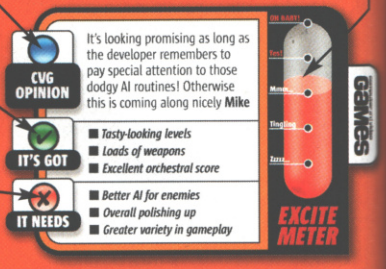
IT'S GOT
The good things we like about the game so far

IT NEEDS
If the developers listen to our advice and include this stuff, it'll get the CVG thumbs up

WHAT THE EXCITE METER™ MEANS

You can tell how excited CVG's experts are about the game being previewed simply by looking at the Excite Meter! Easy, huh?





ENTER THE MATRIX

PUBLISHER
INFOGRAMES
DEVELOPER
SHINY ENTERTAINMENT
OUT: 15 MAY

IN A NUTSHELL

A fighting-dominated, multi-genre stab at integrating film and gaming. Features tons of new Matrix film footage and a script by the Wachowskis, but the actual gameplay doesn't master any of the attempted styles.

PC
CD ROM
PS2
XBOX
GC

WWW.THELASTFREE CITY.COM

For everyone who danced around bullets in Max Payne, the time has come.

Following a train of pretenders, Enter The Matrix is about to be unleashed. Developed by Shiny Entertainment, ETM presents a storyline that runs parallel to that of the new films and the supplementary Animatrix, and actually interacts with them in places. To achieve this, the Wachowski brothers wrote and directed an hour of film footage – real stuff, not dodgy video – to tell the story within the game.

Hiding? Not very Matrix: Keanu doesn't hide

The race to save mankind inevitably ends in a sewer

Cinematic angles? Yes. Cinematic detail? Well...

While it's perhaps a better idea to tell the story with the game, the producers want to dazzle with the film footage. It's a great gimmick, but the interaction with gameplay is in fact shrouded in mystery.

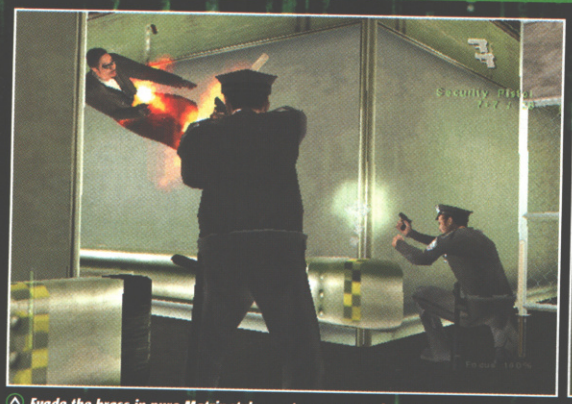
ZION IN DANGER

The story begins with the Animatrix short The Final Flight Of The Osiris, a stunner from Square USA that sets in motion a desperate bid to save Zion from a legion of squidbot Sentinels. The game picks up where Osiris ends, and players must outrace the encroaching machines amid a palpable, insistent feeling of urgency.

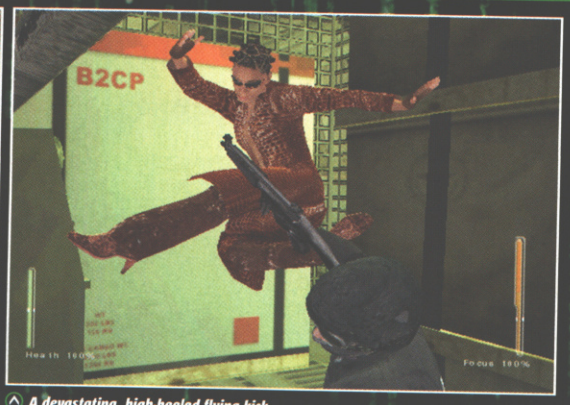
The bulk of the game takes place via an exploration and fighting engine, while supplements include driving and flying. Stringing together disparate styles of play and calling them

BULLET TIME

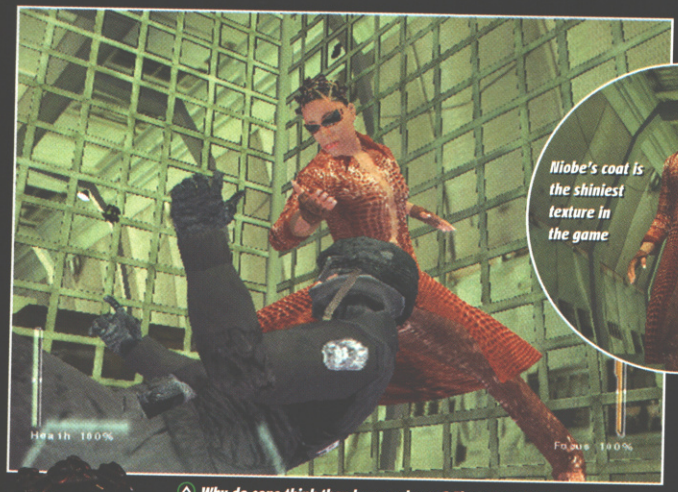
This is what Enter The Matrix does best. It's context-sensitive and controllable, so tap it for slo-mo finishing moves, or focus near a wall to run up it before kicking a baddie in the teeth. And it's even better with guns. Lots of guns.



Evade the brass in pure Matrix style – get your gun and run up the wall



A devastating, high-heeled flying kick



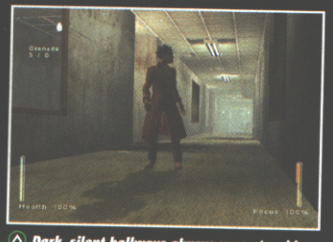
Why do cops think they have a chance? They stoopid or what?

Learn how to light a fire with twin pistols

'integrated' under the mini-game rubric doesn't work, yet that seems to be Shiny's tactic. Despite the two years spent in development, each stage of Enter The Matrix feels stylistically separate from the others, leaving you feeling it's all a cash-in.

The only thing to really set ETM apart from the competition is the inclusion of signature Matrix moves and characters. That's a disappointment, especially when the body-hopping action of Shiny's Messiah offers a glimpse of what drew the Wachowskis to the company in the first place. Here, the result is an undistinguished, roaming brawler with occasional vehicle action to break things up.

Yes! Recoil in pain from my foot-shattering slo-mo attack!



Dark, silent hallways always mean trouble

The hovercraft doesn't exactly provide the most intuitive of game interfaces...

At least the fighting moves are solid, if reliant on button-mashing. Controls are well laid-out and easy to master, following time-worn action conventions.

The signature Matrix touch is provided by the 'focus' button. Pressing or tapping focus (L on the Xbox) opens a wealth of dramatic, time-stretched moves which really spruce up the fights. But it all takes place in bland, over-used environments (palatial interiors, decrepit tenements, etc.), offering little scope for interactivity.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

At preview stage, the driving engine was playable but unfinished and lacking character. Players race from

one point to the next following an arrow prompt, with the option of leaning out the window to fire at pursuers. The hovercraft presentation is equally lacking, feeling like the N64 Forsaken or Descent without the insistent game dynamic.

Granted, the previewed level was unfinished, but it seems to offer little more than a link from one game segment to another. None of the currently playable levels shows off the integration of film and gameplay.

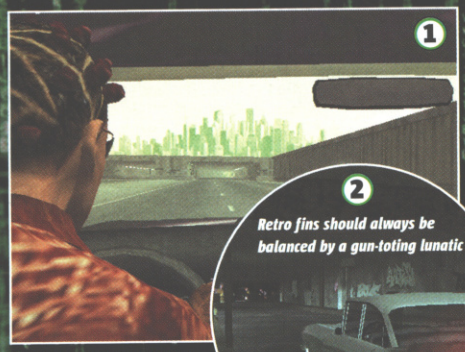
Visually, ETM is behind the curve. A single texture set has been created for the game, which is scaled depending on hardware capabilities. Oddly, the game looks best on GameCube with Xbox a close second and Sony's machine lagging in the distance. Despite support of anamorphic widescreen on Xbox, the standard set by Dead To Rights and Splinter Cell will not be redefined. The game plays similarly across platforms, with Xbox holding the lead for smoothest control.

With scant time left until release, Enter The Matrix leaves an impression that it's a trophy achievement for the film's producers, who have essentially shoehorned an extra film into the series. But will it be a revolutionary game, or a backstep to the halcyon days of FMV? CVG

The natty suits don't make high kicks impossible, thankfully

GRAND THEFT KEANU?

It's impossible not to think of Grand Theft Auto or the Driver series while dodging the cops, especially as those games do it better. It's kinda fun, but ultimately feels like a tacked-on feature.

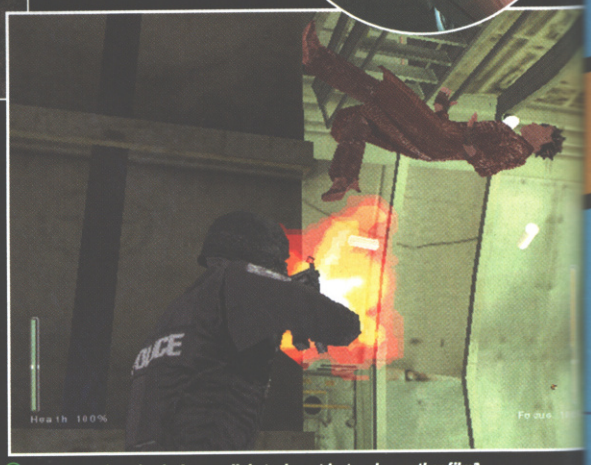


Retro fins should always be balanced by a gun-toting lunatic

Perhaps Shiny made that backdrop with Sim City 4?

Tunnels confound at every turn. Not pictured: wily Sentinels

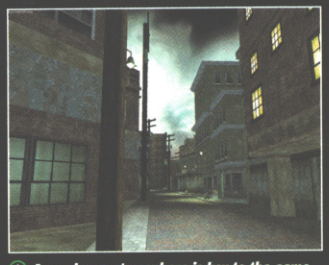
This zen rock garden appears to be placed amid a smouldering lava bed



The cinematic action is done well, but why not just make another film?

Make sure you don't split the snakeskin jumpsuit

A cool move achieved with the 'focus' button – definitely one of the game's best features



An ominous atmosphere is key to the game

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

You can't play as Neo, though he will show up. Badasses Ghost and Niobe stand in, and there's a boss based on Marilyn Manson. Yes, you can kill him

No, there is not a hip-hop video mini-game

Guns, upside-down shades and red snakeskin? An interesting look

CVG OPINION

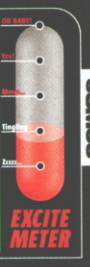
All the glitz in Tinseltown doesn't liven up the drab gameplay. Sure, the all-new footage is great, but why not just make another film? **Alex P**

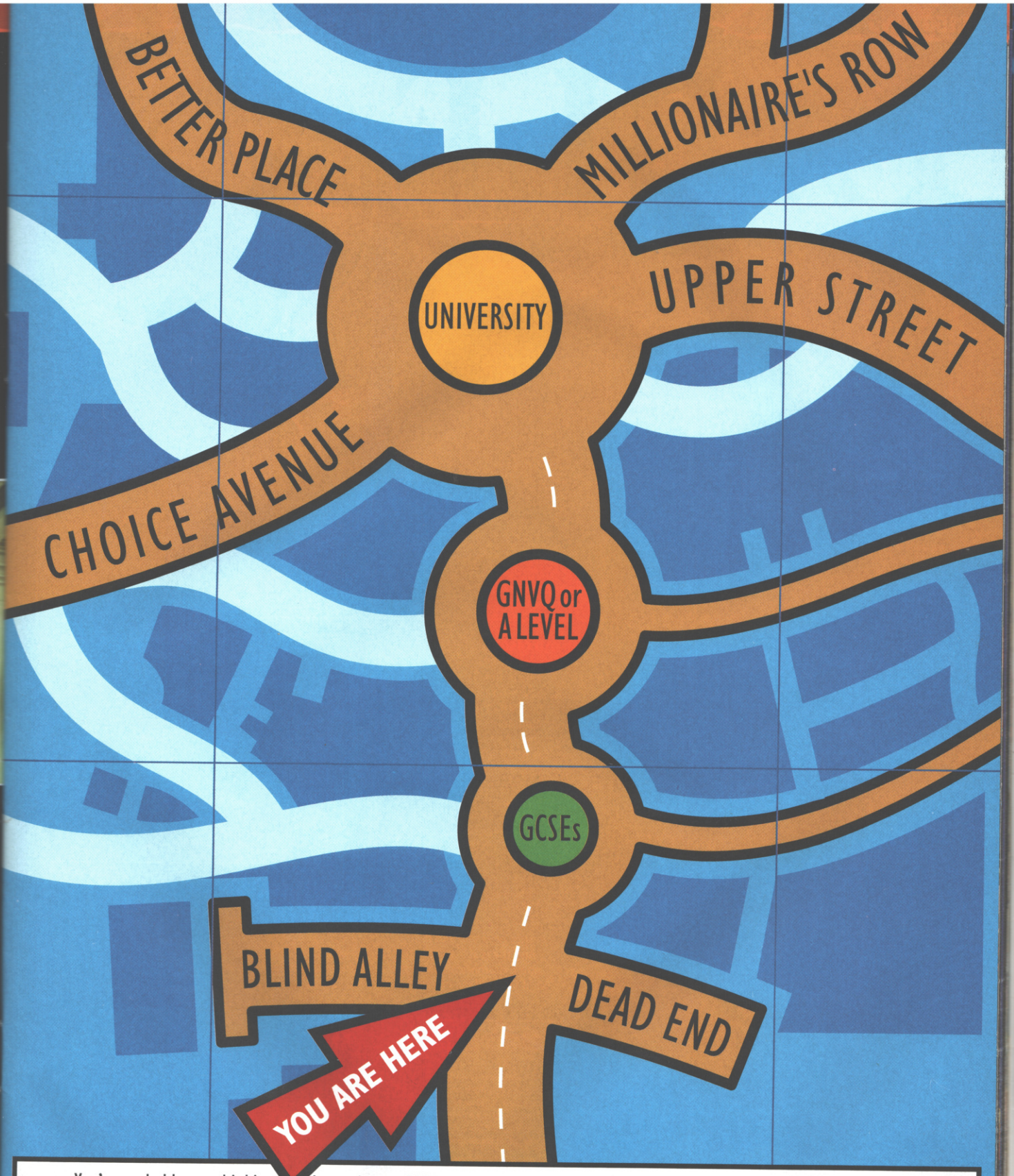
WE LOVE

- The 'focus' implementation
- The dead simple controls
- Beating down Marilyn Manson

WE HATE

- The hovercraft levels
- The bland environments
- It's a £30 film sequel





You're probably not thinking beyond your GCSEs at the moment, but the choices you make now can affect the paths you take later on. There are loads of ways to get on in life but, wherever you want to be, going to college or university will help you get there. For a free magazine that will tell you how to get to uni, what goes on there and how it will help you get a great job, call **0800 587 8500** or visit **www.aimhigher.gov.uk**

Aimhigher™ College or uni...don't leave the future to chance.

FABLE

PUBLISHER
MICROSOFT
DEVELOPER
BIG BLUE BOX
OUT: TBC

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

In a world painfully lacking in innovation and fresh ideas, Fable is a rare treat indeed. There's still much to be done, but if all goes to plan, Fable might just change the face of the role-player as we know it.

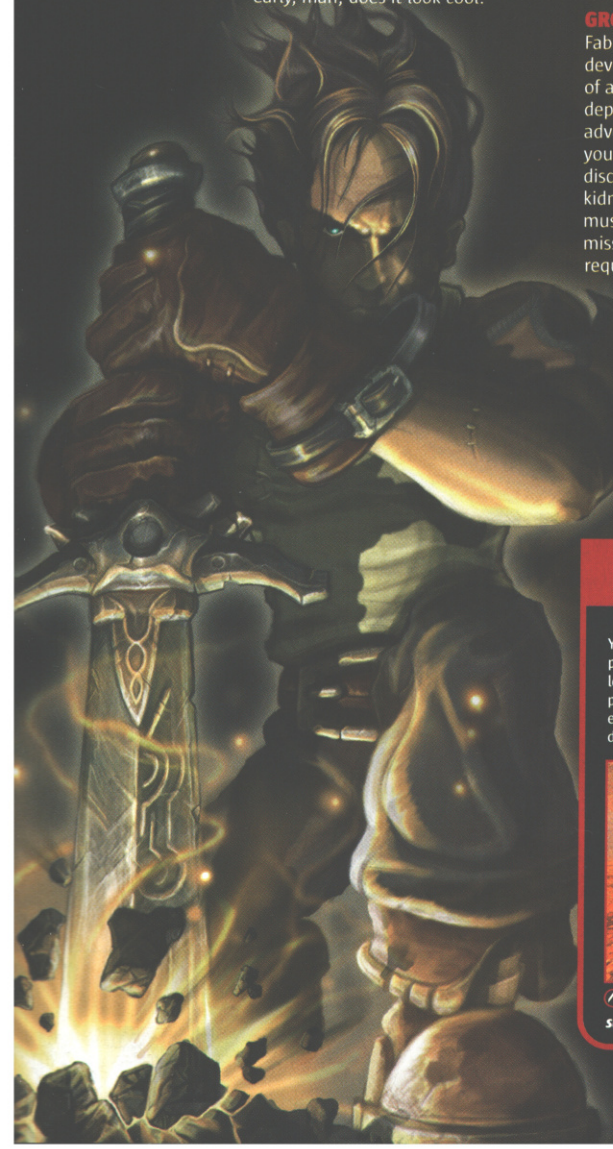
XBOX

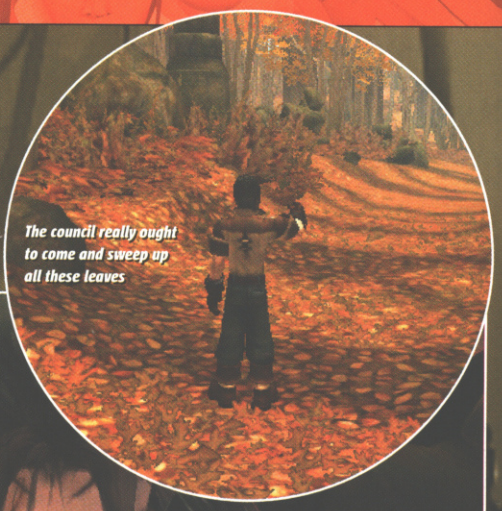
WWW.FABLEGAME.COM

Fable is a game unlike any other you're likely to have experienced. If developer Big Blue Box can reach all the dizzying goals it's set itself, Xbox owners are in for a revolutionary treat.

But that's one big, fat, sweaty Rik Waller of an 'if', and barely a day goes by without one developer or another promising us the Earth then delivering something that amounts to a landfill site in Milton Keynes.

So why should we believe? For one, gaming overlord Peter Molyneux has been heavily involved in the project and has already said: "It's gonna be the best game ever." Right. More importantly, we've seen it ourselves, and although still very early, man, does it look cool.





The council really ought to come and sweep up all these leaves

You wouldn't want to spill his pint, would you?

GROW OLD DISGRACEFULLY

Fable is an 'arcade RPG', to quote the developer, which offers the immediacy of a console action title, with the depth and breadth of an epic adventure. Beginning the game as a young whipper-snapper of 12 who discovers his mother has been kidnapped and his father killed, you must embark on a massive rescue mission which will ultimately require you to save mankind itself.

No pressure, then.

The amazing thing about Fable is that this journey takes the best part of a lifetime, a lifetime which passes by before your very eyes, as your hero grows into a 60-year-old man. And the way you play the game dramatically affects what you will eventually

Mind you don't slip up on those fallen leaves

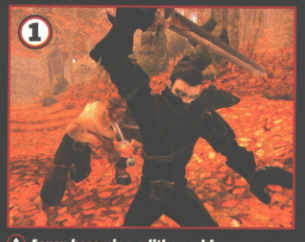
CVG TRANSLATOR

● *THEY SAY: "There's been talk of having things available through Xbox Live." Ian Lovett, art director.*

● *WE SAY: "New quests, exchange of hero data, game-changing items to download – the potential here is immense."*

OVER TO YOU

You're given real choices for the way you play the game, each decision altering the look of your hero. You can be burly, skinny, pale or tanned, tattooed or masked. You can even cross-dress, and your appearance will dramatically affect the way NPCs treat you.



1 Fancy becoming a lithe and fearsome samurai fighter? Just step this way...

2 This is the wee young fellow you begin as

3 The more aggressive and ruthless gamer may end up like this thug

CV

● THE
place
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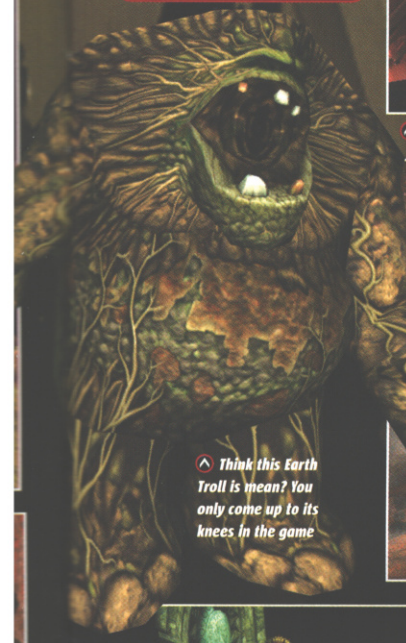
How can a

CVG TRANSLATOR

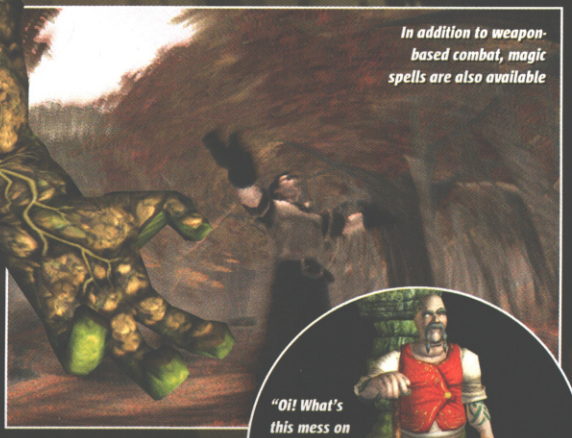
● **THEY SAY:** *"It's the sort of place you could send Hansel and Gretel and know they wouldn't come back from."* Simon Carter, managing director of Big Blue Box.

● **WE SAY:** *"The fairytale world of Fable is rich in detail and imagination, providing the level of believability an role-player absolutely requires."*

Lawnmowers are for the weak, you know. Seize your sword and go forth



Think this Earth Troll is mean? You only come up to its knees in the game



In addition to weapon-based combat, magic spells are also available

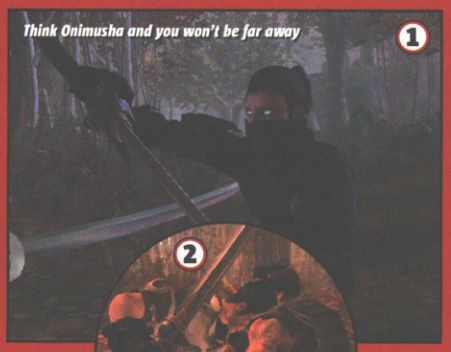
"Oi! What's this mess on my floor?"

You'll be competing against the likes of this honey

Looking a little warm in this cave. Thermal undercrackers probably not needed

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

This may be a role-player but the fight system is highly reminiscent of Capcom's Onimusha. With one button to attack and one to block, you can perform a range of stylish, devastating blows and combos by timing button presses correctly. 'Ave it!



Looks like I need a 7 iron. Fore!

One of the spectacular views that will greet you

become – behave like a noble and powerful hero and you'll grow into a muscle-bound demi-god, adored by the people. Choose stealth, cowardice and the night as bedfellows, however, and you will be a scrawny, pallid shadow of a man – and so on.

Built around this is the promise of a thrilling, varied adventure across a luscious fairytale world, filled with innovation and imagination, that mixes an engaging narrative with frequently frantic action. With the likelihood of Xbox Live downloadable content, transfer of hero data between Xboxes and much more besides, Fable is a title that could redefine the way role-players are made.

How can a windmill be scary? Er, it just can

CVG OPINION

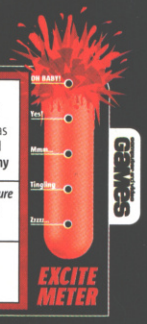
An applaudable attempt to really push the boundaries of adventure gaming. If it's half as good as it promises, this could be a real seller for Xbox. **Johnny**

WE LOVE

- An epic, revolutionary adventure
- Unique character progression
- Breathtaking visuals

WE HATE

- Could do with a smoother frame-rate



WWE CRUSH HOUR

■ PUBLISHER
THQ
■ DEVELOPER
POWER & LIGHT
■ OUT: APRIL

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

The Rock, Triple H and the other usual suspects exchange grappling on the canvas for playing Dodgems in vehicles with huge guns attached. One of the weirdest and wildest uses of a licence yet.

WWW.THQ.COM/GAMES/INDEX.ASP

Live feeds of the action appear on screens around the arenas

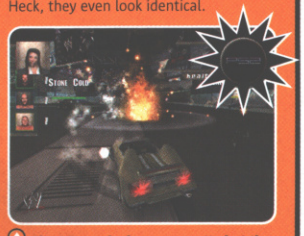
Wrestling isn't about reality. So it really shouldn't have been such a surprise when THQ announced the vehicle-based combat game WWE Crush Hour.

What's next, though? Leather-clad rhythm-action with Stone Cold Steve Austin? Or how about a lightgun game where you have to shoot the straps off Stacey and her fellow WWE Divas' skimpy costumes? Whatever the direction of the next spin-off that's no doubt in the pipeline, we hope it's as much fun as Crush Hour is shaping up to be.

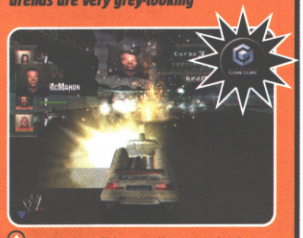
Van Dam is so preoccupied with taking out Ric, he's run into a whacking great tanker

FORMAT FACE-OFF

Crush Hour wants to leave dirty great skid marks on both your PS2 and GC and from what we've seen there are few differences between the two versions. Heck, they even look identical.

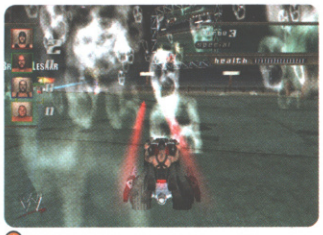


The PS2 explosions are pretty but the arenas are very grey-looking



And what did we tell you? It looks just the same on GameCube...

The action might be fairly old-hat but the particle effects scream next-gen



Is this a ropy smoke effect or has The Undertaker unleashed a ghostly attack?

STUPID WRESTLING IDIOTS

It's as simple as Destruction Derby was six years ago: you choose a car, take it to the arena and bash up everyone else's until you're the last man standing. Crush Hour adds weapons of extreme destruction to help with the splitting of steel and flesh, each of which can be upgraded by driving over special tokens.

The upgrades themselves include mighty grenade launchers, sneaky mines and frighteningly powerful laser-guided missiles. A certain Middle Eastern dictator would be impressed.

Levels are themed around WWE events, such as Hell In A Cell and SmackDown!, and do a good job of being authentic even without any man-on-man grappling in the game. And this could be the biggest problem with Crush Hour – there's just not much interaction with your favourite wrestling heroes, so the WWE element feels tacked on to the bog-standard car combat idea.

Released at a budget price (some hint as low as £19.99), it's clear that not even THQ takes this seriously. Which isn't to say it's going to be a bad game, of course.

The huge explosions and flying car parts will rock you up

MONSTER TRUCKIN' VEHICLES

WWE is all about size: big biceps, big attitudes, big bone-headed idiots batting each other about the ring. You'd expect the WWE superstars to drive around in some fairly hefty machinery, and you'd not be wrong. No Mini Coopers here – just giant hulks of steel piloted by giant hulks of steroids.

Fitting that the biggest wrestler gets the biggest vehicle

Who do you reckon gets to ride in a kick-ass car like this?

It's a battle of the big wheels versus the big biceps! Who will win – man or machine?

Samey screenshots, samey gameplay, but it will definitely please younger WWE fans

CVG OPINION

Unquestionably a bizarre use of the WWE licence, this nonetheless looks like it'll be a cheap and cheerful dose of car-based carnage. **Lee**

WE LOVE

- Fast-paced combat
- Big bloomin' weapons
- Pretty explosions

WE HATE

- What's it got to do with WWE?
- The heroes are quite scarce
- Where's the four-player?

X-MEN™ WOLVERINE'S™ REVENGE

Watch out when enemies power up moves cos you're in for a beating

PUBLISHER
ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER
GENEPOOL
OUT: APRIL/MAY

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Adamantium-clawed sneaking-around, titanium-boned brawling and highly stylish killing. Think X-Men directed by John Woo. Which is a good thing.

XBOX
GC

WWW.ACTIVISION.COM

In the past, very few Wolverine games have been up to much. The latest wants to change all that.

Thanks to the development team constituting a group of Marvel maniacs, ex-comic writers and comic artists, it looks likely that history won't repeat itself. In fact, Marvel is reportedly so pleased with Genepool's efforts thus far, that the comic giant has granted the game-makers the artistic licence and even allowed it to show parts of Wolverine's past that have yet to be seen by anyone. Score!

We can't talk about that yet, because it would ruin the game. But we can tell you that you can expect to find Wendigo, Juggernaut, Collosus, Magneto, Sabretooth and a few more guest stars somewhere in the game.

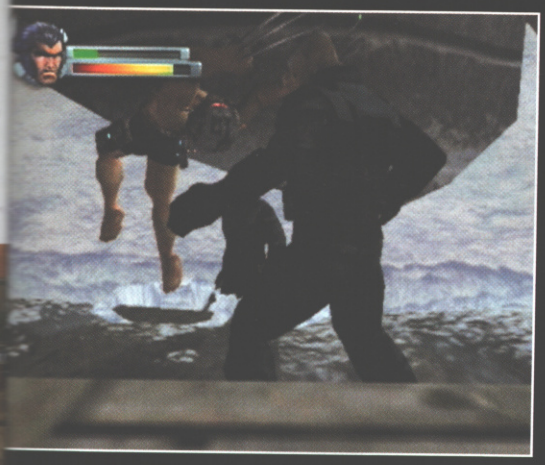
STRIKE WHILE THE ADAMANTIUM IS HOT

Strike attacks are special kills done when you're in a certain position and the opponent is helpless. Simply get between one, two or three enemies, watch for the STRIKE alert and press a combination of buttons to unleash the fancy death moves. WWE take note.

The fight descends into a playground bundle

With the enemies bloodied and beaten you can rummage through their pockets

For the ultimate humiliation Wolverine stacks the goons like LEGO bricks



The choreographed fights are so cool you'll wanna be a ballerina. Er...

Sabretooth salivates while staring psychotically at Wolverine's helmet

Wolverine's dance instructor was often left frustrated when teaching him to tango

REELING SENSES

As for gameplay, the fighting action is kept fresh throughout by allowing you to kill opponents in about 50 different ways, which are gradually unlocked as you play. This produces some of the most beautifully choreographed set pieces of videogame violence we've seen in ages. It's a lot better than watching contemporary dance, at any rate.

Picking up comics lets you use Wolverine's many costumes. Yes, even the yellow spandex

Wolverine also has a unique 'sense' mode, which enables him to pick up heat signals emanating from landmines, or the sounds of guards' footsteps a few rooms away. You need to be careful, though, as you're vulnerable in this state: you can't attack, so you'll need to suss out when's best to sneak and when an all-out attack would be more appropriate.

Wolverine's Revenge should be a successful mixture of familiar game styles, and the new X-Men movie on the horizon will certainly help raise excitement levels to fever pitch. CVG

CVG OPINION

This looks promising and could well mark a return to form for the X-Men game licence. We wait with baited, smelly, man-wolf breath. **Danny**

WE LOVE

- Bags of variety
- Brilliant, violent set pieces
- Tons of neat ideas

WE HATE

- Lack of blood
- Weak impact when fighting
- Limited 'sense mode' puzzles

Def Jam VENDETTA

Is there any game released these days that doesn't feature a token greasy pimp?

Killah turns Ludacris into chicken wings. He'll be deep-frying him later to the Colonel's secret recipe

PUBLISHER
EA BIG
DEVELOPER
AKI
OUT APRIL 25

x4

IN A NUTSHELL

A brutal beat 'em up starring 12 hip-hop stars from the legendary Def Jam label among a wide roster of over 45 characters. Add great music and an addictive challenge – forget the gimmicks, this is a real contender.

WWW.DEFJAM VENDETTA.COM

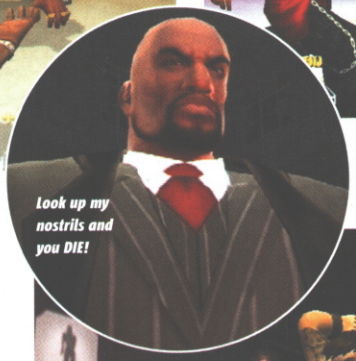
Hip-hop stars in wrestling shocker! On paper it sounds like one of the strangest, most car-crash-inducing ideas for a videogame ever. In execution, however, Def Jam Vendetta is shaping up to be a wild ride that hip-hop-heads and wrestling freaks should take notice of.

First off, it's not strictly a wrestling title. Despite having famed wrestling producers Aki on board (responsible for WWF No Mercy on the N64), Vendetta feels more like a wrestling game combined with Street Fighter. Add some over-the-top characters designed by the team responsible for NBA Street and the cocktail is complete. It's a funky blend of different beat 'em up styles that all types of fight fans should enjoy.

So where do Def Jam fit in? They supply a killer soundtrack of course, but they also provide some of their own artists who gladly step into the ring to show punk asses what time it is.

The fights are takin' it to the streets cos they still got love for their peeps

Nyne reprezents for the hoods of gangstas all across the world



Look up my nostrils and you DIE!

HIP-HOP HOORAY!

Ludacris, DMX, Method Man and Redman are among 12 Def Jam stars that appear in Vendetta. They may already have amazed you with lyrical flows but now they're going to dazzle you with hard-hitting bodyslams and throws.

The rap stars appear as bosses in the story mode. Why they are fighting in the first place isn't really explained in what little story there is. All you need to know is that they're all on the side of the local crime boss D-Mob. You're fighting to help out your best bud Manny, who has managed to run up huge debts with D-Mob.

The fights take place in an illegal underworld setting, so there's plenty of money to be

Enhance your fighter's skills by spilling your cash in all of the essential six categories

Beware the stinky cheese foot attack. It can prove even more deadly than fresh napalm

BLAZIN' SQUAD

Performing complex moves earns you momentum. When the momentum meter reaches maximum you enter Blazin' mode, allowing you to perform a powerful finisher that resembles the Gamebreaker moves in NBA Street. Each character has two unique finishers, one from a front grapple and the other from the back. Performing a Blazin' finisher when your opponent's health is in the danger level results in a knockout. Booyaa!

When the Blazin' meter lights up it's your signal to perform a powerful finisher

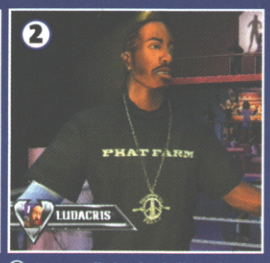
Moses is a man of the cloth. He favours some suitably Undertaker-like moves

Ludacris takes a spin from Dan G

RECOGNISE THE FACE?

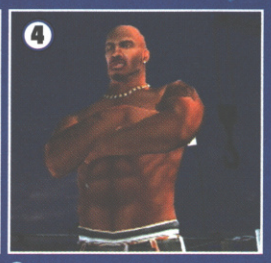
A world of hip-hop stars from the Def Jam label are waiting in your path to the top of the underground fight scene. Each star had input into their portrayal, even coming up with their own insults to be featured before each bout. As much as we like the roster, it's a shame it's restricted to Def Jam artists. A hip-hop game without the likes of Jay-Z, Eminem, Missy Elliott and Snoop is criminal.

Method Man and Redman combine to make a fearsome tag-team



A pony-tailed Ludacris fights from the luxury of his own club

Ghostface Killah shows off his string vest and huge medallion

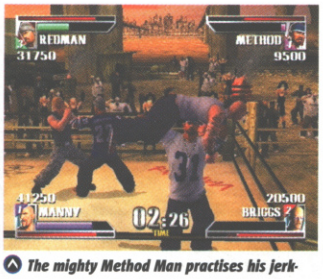


DMX covers up his frosted nipples, afraid of catching a cold

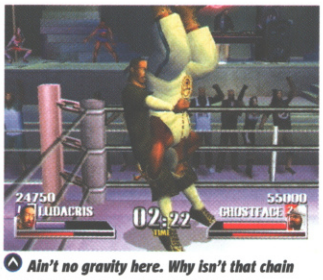
This is your girl, Angel, who's modelled on lovely Christina Milian

Dan G may dress like an old-skool LL Cool J, but he's full of breakdancin' goodness

Who invited these clowns? The latest rejects from Gerry Cottle's circus join in the fray



The mighty Method Man practises his jerk-and-hold for the crowd's pleasure



Ain't no gravity here. Why isn't that chain smacking him in the face? That's wack!

made. There's also the small matter of Angel (modelled on Christina Milian), your ex-girlfriend, who is now shacked up with D-Mob. If you've got the moves, maybe you can win her back.

FA'SHNIZZLE!

As you progress in the Story mode you can beef up your fighters skills by spending prize money. There are six different skill categories: Power, Grappling, Speed, Defence, Stamina and Charisma. It's vital to improve your brawler in all of these areas, but as these skills improve, your opponents get noticeably tougher.

M.O.R.E. had better start flexing and quick, if he's got a chance in hell of beating Moses

The in-ring action uses a simple control system with light and heavy attacks and grapples. Most attacks can be reversed and countered, so it's a good idea to make your opponent groggy before executing a crunching bodyslam. Stronger slams and hits result in you being stunned for longer. You'll also want to keep an eye on the momentum meter as this enables you to perform special finishing moves.

We'll be reviewing DJV next month. Until then, turn up the beats on the stereo and check out these screens. CVG

LADIES FIRST

As luck would have it, winning fights in the story mode attracts the ladies. Lots of ladies. So many, in fact, that they'll be fighting each other for the right to stand by your side. This results in a gratuitous mini-game where you must pick your fave and then battle her challenger in the ring. If that wasn't enough, there are also some saucy pics of the girls for you to spend your prize money on... if you want.

Nice moves. How does she manage to do it in those heels?

Penny models the Britney look quite well, we think

Buy pics of your favourite squeeze. You know you want to

Eek! Where's her head gone? Don't answer that...

CVG OPINION

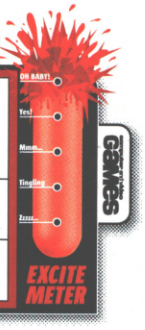
Even if hip-hop's not your thing, there's a lot to enjoy here. A great blend of wrestling and pure brawling, Vendetta's one to watch, y'all. **Alex H**

WE LOVE

- Great fight engine
- Cool characters
- Strong soundtrack

WE HATE

- Not enough prominent rap stars
- Could benefit from diverse victory criteria



GAMEAGE

HULK

EXCLUSIVE FIRST SCREENS!

■ PUBLISHER
VIVENDI UNIVERSAL
■ DEVELOPER
RADICAL/POCKET
■ OUT: JUNE 13

ONLINE GAMING | GBA version 1-4 players

IN A NUTSHELL

Action-adventure spin-off from the imminent Ang Lee movie based on Marvel's not-so-jolly-green-giant comic-book hero. Toss tanks as the Hulk and get stealthy as brainy-but-wimpy alter-ego Banner.

XBOX, GC, PC, GBA

WWW.HULKGAMES.COM

The Hulk. Big green bloke, makes Tara Palmer-Tomkinson look like Einstein and has anger-management issues. Spends much of his time busting up cities, and the rest of it as brilliant scientist Bruce Banner. You probably don't even know how or why, but you knew that already, right?

Somehow everyone knows the basics about old Hulkie. He's been big in comics for decades, and the great green bogie's telly show was the Seventies equivalent of Xena's (only the bouncing norks were male). Even today you can show almost any kid a picture of a giant, scary ape-like humanoid and they'll think of Hulk. Or maybe Rik Waller.

CVG ANGRY, CVG WANT MORE

And now he's about to get bigger. Much bigger, as this summer the Hulk becomes the latest comic book hero to get the full Hollywood CG makeover, courtesy of director Ang Lee of Crouching Tiger fame. So naturally Vivendi Universal has a game to go with it, though rather *un*naturally it's being a bit coy about letting CVG at it. We have seen it in action, though, albeit briefly, and managed to bag you the first screenshots.

Besides that, we know the world is up the Gary Glitter if Banner/Hulk can't foil super-villain the Leader's plans for an army of creatures imbued with the same Gamma powers that created our Jekyll and Hyde hero, and that gameplay varies according to which persona you're playing as.

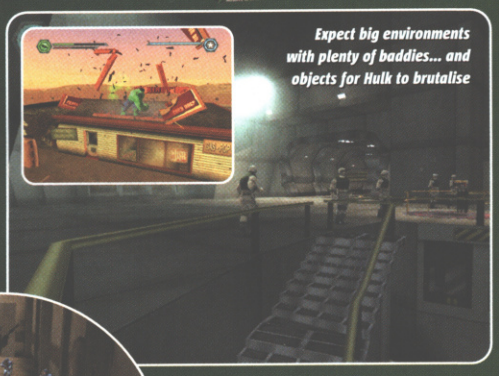
The film cast has been used for voice acting in the game, and some of the 30 massive levels include environments lifted from the flick. However, indications are that the storyline will spin off from the movie plot rather than follow it exactly.

From what we've seen so far, it seems that pretty much everything in the levels can be battered by Hulk, who can smash through walls, toss trucks and tanks around as weapons, and pick enemies up by the neck before flinging them into walls like crash test dummies.

HULK MAKE MONEY

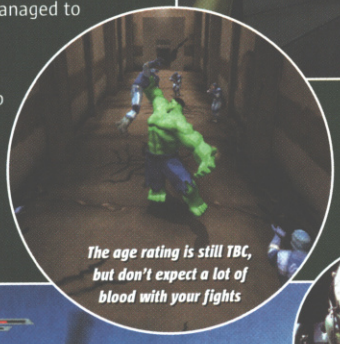
As with any Hollywood blockbuster, expect shops to be flooded with Hulk toys and tat this summer. Our favourite so far is this Hulk mask. Put it on and your voice changes. Wow.

Me Hulk! Me make lots of money!

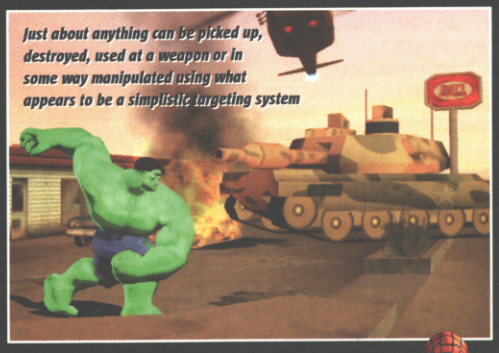


Expect big environments with plenty of baddies... and objects for Hulk to brutalise

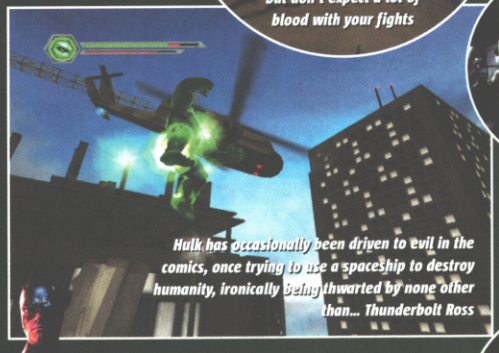
Spot the signature move!



The age rating is still TBC, but don't expect a lot of blood with your fights



Just about anything can be picked up, destroyed, used at a weapon or in some way manipulated using what appears to be a simplistic targeting system



Hulk has occasionally been driven to evil in the comics, once trying to use a spaceship to destroy humanity, ironically being thwarted by none other than... Thunderbolt Ross

BANA-NARAMA

If you know your Hulk, you'll be happy to see the Hollywood names that have made it into the movie and, as Vivendi would have us believe, the game as well...

Boo, hiss! It's supervillain Thaddeus 'Thunderbolt' Ross, father of none other than...

..Betty Ross. In the comics, she marries Hulk, but only after ditching someone called...

...Glen Talbot, who blames the split on the one and only scientist turned green hooligan...

...Banner, who, spookily, is played by actor Eric Bana, from Black Hawk Down...

...All of which is directed by this guy, Ang Lee, whose credits include, erm, Sense And Sensibility

MARVEL-LOUS IDEA

In the absence of many cold hard facts about the home console versions from Vivendi, here are some comic book Hulk developments that we'd love to see featured in the games. Just don't hold your breath for them...

■ Between them, Hulk and Banner have enough split personalities to keep a shrink in caviar for decades, including the Gray Hulk, evil from-the-future Hulk, the Maestro Professor Hulk and Banner as Savage Hulk – all with different strengths and weaknesses. Perfect videogame fodder...

■ Daredevil, Wolverine, Batman and Spider-Man have all recently got their own videogames and movies, but how cool would it be to see them fighting against or alongside the Hulk (superhero co-op!) – as they've already done in Marvel's comics. Imagine Marvel Vs Capcom busting out of its 2D arena beat 'em up confines into a full action-adventure...

MINI ME HULK

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

Wedging The Hulk into a massive industrial steel press and squidging him down to a few pixels high to fit him into a GBA game is no mean feat. London-based Pocket Studios has done it, causing a strange rift in the time-reality continuum. CVG's Pete went to investigate and talked to David Williams, Pocket's Development Director...

He may be tiny on GBA but he's still got a huge leap

Hulk flummoxed in identity parade. All soldiers look same!

Hulk Gamma guff!

■ What are the main game features?

"You play as Hulk through the entire game in a world based on the look and feel of the original '60s comics. We spent a lot of time reading the comics and looking up research material on the Net and on Marvel's own ftp resource.

"There are stunning isometric 3D environments and characters – we didn't feel that we could do justice to a Hulk game by simply sticking him in a side-scrolling platform beat 'em up. So we have created some stunning worlds for the Hulk to explore and destroy! All of the assets in the game were created from scratch and treated like we were creating a 'next-gen' title. Have a look at the 3D models and you'll see what we mean.

"The Hulk can smash scenery and break through walls as we wanted to give the player the feeling that Hulk is very powerful. The only way of doing this was to allow him to destroy the scenery. We spent a lot of time developing technology that allowed us to do this, and I think it works really nicely.

"Being able to pick up and throw objects again helps give the impression that Hulk is an amazingly powerful creature. The Hulk can pick up small objects like barrels, all the way up to tanks and trucks. Of course there's no point in picking up a tank unless he can throw it at people, so picking up objects and throwing them forms a major part of the gameplay."

The lower left meter is health

■ Does your GBA version of the Hulk closely follow the plot of the movie? If not, what variations on what happens have you included?

"The GBA version doesn't follow the plot of the movie at all. Instead we've gone retro and taken storylines and characters from the original 1960s Hulk comics. If you were to look at Essential Hulk Volume 1, you'd definitely get the idea."

■ How closely have you guys worked with Marvel on both looks and plot?

"Because we weren't following the movie plot it was slightly easier for us as we had all the early comics as reference for artwork and storylines. But generally, as the comics were written in the '60s, the graphic style and technology is set in that time. Obviously, Marvel has still had to approve the artwork."

Specials include Hulk Smash, Jump-Smash, Charge and Thunder Clap

■ Does Hulk have similar moves to Marvel Vs Capcom Hulk?

"We haven't seen anything of the next-gen versions, but our Hulk has a variety of moves including punching, barging, smashing jumping, etc. The Hulk has a rage level and the number of moves he has available is dependant on how angry he is. Smashing up objects and bad guys increases his aggression as does getting hit by enemies. Obviously the angrier he gets the more powerful his moves become.

The game isn't a straight beat 'em up like the Marvel Vs Capcom title. Our Hulk has a storyline and a mission structure that flows throughout the game. There are puzzles that need to be solved to progress through – Hulk can't solve every problem by smashing things up."

Terrain includes desert, sci-fi city, army base, laboratory and cavern

■ How does the Banner/Hulk dynamic work? Stealthy Bruce action, tank-tossing scrolling beat 'em up Hulk action?

"Tank tossing?? Ahem... Banner only appears in the cutscenes to help lead the player through the story. We were asked to do a purely Hulk game, so concentrated on the violence side rather than the soft-edged nature of Banner."

■ Is there multiplayer and unlockable stuff? How many players and game modes are there – do you need more than one cart? Do you get access to more stuff if you have more than one cart when playing in multiplayer?

"There is multiplayer, which supports up to four players at once. The gameplay is similar to Power Stone and Poy Poy, where the Hulk can run around picking up objects and throwing them at his opponents. Because of the huge amount of animation in the characters, there needs to be one cartridge per player."

The lower right fists are Hulk's Special gauge

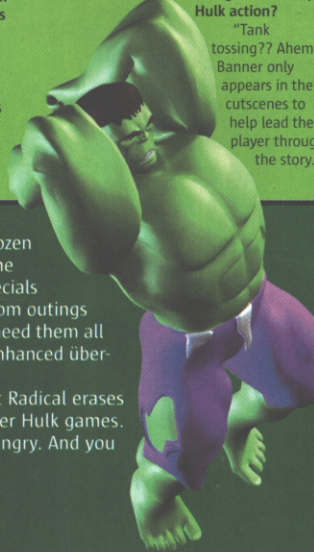
■ How many hours of play are there? What's the replay potential?

"The test teams are getting through the game in about two days of constant play, and they've been playing it for months! The game has 33 large levels, so it's pretty big."

■ Are there any non-Hulk influences behind the game?

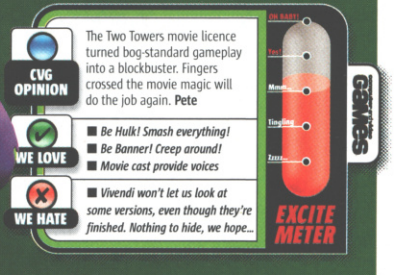
"We looked at quite a few isometric games when designing Hulk, although most of them weren't too useful. I think Baldur's Gate Dark Alliance was the game that was played most at the start, but maybe that was just because we liked playing it!"

Almost everything can be smashed up



The Green One has over two dozen moves at his disposal, including the Gamma Slam, plus one or two specials reminiscent of his Marvel Vs Capcom outings such as the Sonic Clap. And he'll need them all for boss battles against Gamma-enhanced über-villains such as Half Life.

Here at CVG we're hoping that Radical erases the evil memories of certain earlier Hulk games. Otherwise Hulk will start to get angry. And you won't like him when he's angry...



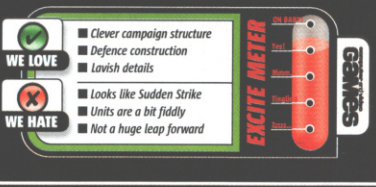
■ PUBLISHER: CDV
■ DEVELOPER: NIVAL INTERACTIVE
■ OUT: APRIL
PC ROM
ONLINE GAMING x16
WWW.NIVAL.COM/ENQ/BLITZKRIEG_INFO.HTML

BLITZKRIEG

Blitzkrieg knows its audience, ignoring flashy graphics in favour of a WWII challenge that's realistic while remaining fun. Imagine Sudden Strike meets Microsoft's classic Close Combat and you're getting there.

Build defences such as trenches, improve your units' abilities role-player-style, and tackle random side-battles which earn you better equipment, giving you an edge when you tackle the main historic encounters. All of which means loads of replay potential.

Command the Germans, Allies or Soviets in three separate campaigns



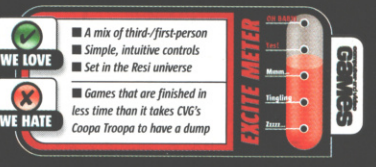
■ PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
■ DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
■ OUT: JULY
ONLINE GAMING
WWW.CAPCOM.COM

RESIDENT EVIL™ DEAD AIM

It's no big secret Capcom wants us to forget the rubbish Resi lightgun games that have come before, and the new explore-in-third-person but fight-in-first-person formula helps – up to a point.

At four to five hours long, the plot is kept simple and fast-paced, with gameplay mostly about shooting the hell out of zombies, with the odd 'find key' type puzzle thrown in. Characters include anti-umbrella agent Bruce, cute Chinese agent Fongling and old pal Tyrant. Phew!

Just forget Gun Survivor ever happened, right?



FREELANCER

- PUBLISHER MICROSOFT
- DEVELOPER DIGITAL ANVIL
- OUT: APRIL 18

ONLINE GAMING x32

IN A NUTSHELL

What happens when you take Wing Commander and Elite, mash them together into one and throw millions of dollars at the result to make it look nice? This: buy, sell, loot, kill, destroy, protect – everything you could ask for.

WWW.MICROSOFT.COM/GAMES/FREELANCER

When a game is over five years in the making, you can usually guarantee it'll be a waste of everyone's time and money. The Getaway, anyone?

Thankfully, Freelancer doesn't fall into this category. Although it's been delayed more times than the 08:15 from Paddington, for once it seems our patience is to be rewarded. It's everything you've ever wanted in a space sim, wrapped up in the best graphics we've seen this side of, well, X2 (see opposite).

GREED IS GOOD

You play Trent, a mercenary with little more than a ship, a gun, a handful of credits and the kind of stony-faced grimace that passes for 'hard' over the pond in Hollywood.

Whether you're trading goods, running errands, hunting criminals, even being a pirate, it's all up to you. There's a background story about terrorists to dip in and out of, but mainly Freelancer gives you the freedom to do whatever you want.

With plenty of ships to choose from, dozens of star systems and hundreds of planets to visit, plus more background intrigue than a typical day in Parliament, Freelancer should be well worth the wait. CVG

Bars are a good place to pick up work

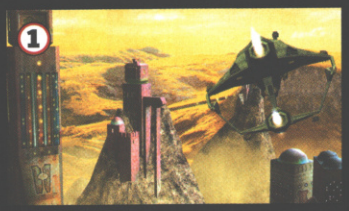
Jumpgates provide quick travel options

The bigger the ship, the bigger the explosion. Nasty business

Pirates love to hide in junk piles

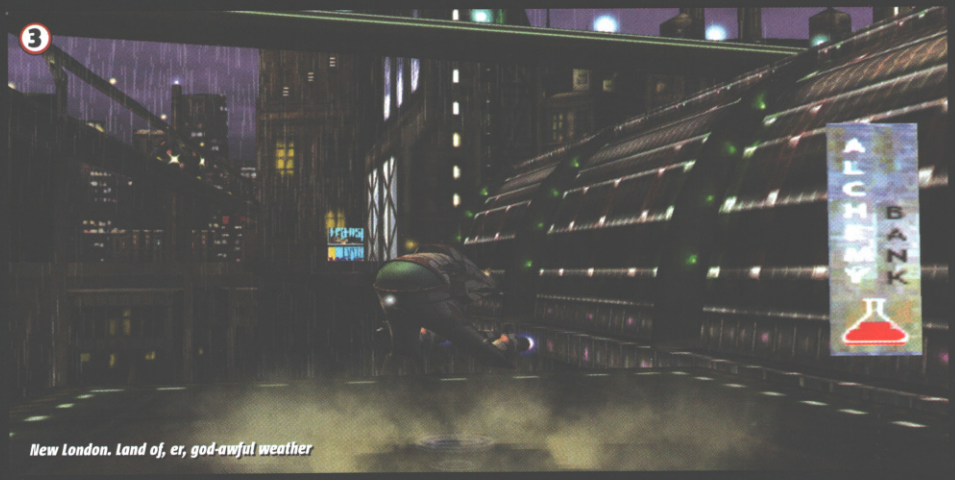
GOING PLACES

Freelancer's universe bases itself on four of today's real-world locales – Great Britain, the US, Japan and Germany. Each area contains plenty of star systems, each with a collection of planets, moons, space stations, trading lanes, asteroid belts and other areas of mystery.



New California, a land of sun and natural beauty

New Tokyo, a hi-tech paradise of the cutting edge



New London. Land of, er, god-awful weather

STAR WARS

UNIVERSE	Sector-based, by wormh
RACES	Only humans lots of th
STORY	Deep plot a terrorists and
ECONOMY	Fixed prices each stati
MISSIONS	Bounty hunt assassinati search an destroy - f

So who will w ultimate ruler both

FREELAN

The beautifully colourful, wilder regions of space

There's always loads going on, whichever direction you look

CVG OPINION

A massively playable space trader. Could become repetitive in places and the FMV dialogue needs work, but it's easy to get into and looks amazing. Prez

WE LOVE

- Total freedom of action
- Stunning graphics
- Tense combat sequences

WE HATE

- Repetitive cut-scenes
- Occasionally samey dogfights
- Waiting so long!

The best-

X2 – THE THREAT

YO HO HO

Now CVG couldn't possibly endorse piracy, but we guess it's okay in X2. You can build up a whole fleet of ships then programme them to go on looting runs with or without you. And in best Hollywood villain style, you can use your sprawling business empire as a mere front for your evil schemes – while rubbing your hands together conspiratorially and cackling, of course.

Just a quiet day of mooching around in Sector 19. Don't ask what a busy day's like

Suddenly your band of bloodthirsty pirates arrives on the scene

Ooh-ar, m' hearty. Plunder that loot!

- PUBLISHER TBC
- DEVELOPER EGOSOFT
- OUT: TBC

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Here we have another Elite for the new millennium. What sets this apart is the ability to build your own business empire alongside the shooting, trading and piracy options. Plus it looks like nothing else on Earth... er, in space.

BBFC 12

WWW.EGOSOFT.COM

So who will win the battle to become the ultimate ruler of the universe? Here's how both games match up...

FREELANCER	X2
Sector-based, linked by wormholes	Sector-based, linked by wormholes
Only humans, but lots of them	More aliens than the Sangatte immigration camp
Deep plot about terrorists and politics	Clichéd nonsense about families
Fixed prices at each station	Fluid economy based on supply and demand
Bounty hunting, assassinations, search and destroy – fun!	Trading escorts, goods deliveries, occasional taxiing service – just like being at work

Okay, so Freelancer is all about flying about in space, trading, shooting and whatnot. And so is X2 – The Threat. So what are we talking? The same game? Barely a difference beyond the cosmetic? Hardly.

First up, well, look at it! Graphically, X2 is *astonishing*. And wait until you see it moving. The pace of the game is slower than in Freelancer, which gives the whole thing a sort of chilled, tripped-out, hippies-in-space sort of feel. Only with shooting and trading and looting and killing aplenty...

Doesn't anyone just do plain, black space anymore?

The bigger ships in the selection are REALLY big

This is what happens when you go in unprepared

You can command multiple ships at once

VIRGIN INTERGALACTIC

The other main difference between the two games is that X2 lets you run an entire business empire in space. Build factories, stations, armies, huge fleets of ships. Run everything from the cockpit or the boardroom (sort of). Fly your lumbering transporters or your nippy escort fighters. Or you can just stick with the mercenary-for-hire route and fly missions for others.

It looks like knocking Freelancer into a cold hat, and considering how good that game looks like being, that's saying something! CVG

The best-looking business sim we've ever seen, readers, and that's saying something

Combat is less frequent, but when it kicks off... that's a whole other story

CVG OPINION

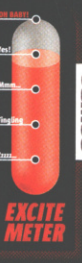
X2 is Elite plus everything the Elite fan has ever asked for. Its scope is breathtaking and it's easily the best-looking game we've ever seen on a PC. **Prez**

WE LOVE

- The best graphics ever
- Plenty of longevity
- Bloody HUGE ships

WE HATE

- No multiplayer games
- No online world to explore
- Lack of on-foot adventuring



Tak AND the POWER OF JUJU

■ PUBLISHER
THQ
■ DEVELOPER
AVALANCHE SOFTWARE
■ OUT: WINTER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

This synergetic 3D platform game from THQ and Nickelodeon marks the first push in a massive multimedia Tak assault upon your senses – and wallet!

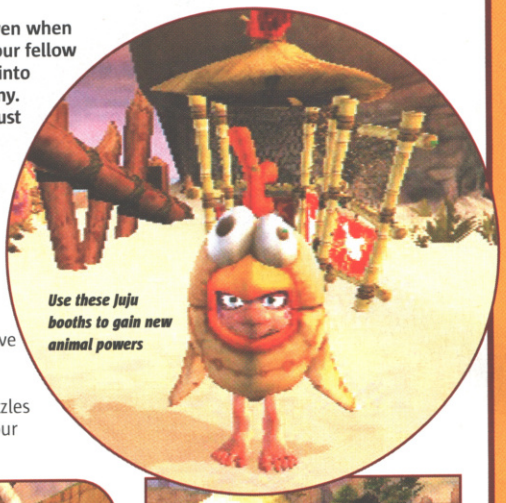
GC

WWW.THQ.COM

Sheep are funny. Even when they're actually your fellow island folk transformed into sheep form, they're funny. Toss them, herd them, just don't feed them to the lions in this brand new cartoon platform game.

BLEET, BLEET

Mixing gameplay elements from Herdy Gerdy, Mario and even Pikmin, Tak is a huge adventure where you have to use the animals, as well as the objects Tak collects, to solve the puzzles and ultimately rescue your sheeped-up buddies.



Use these Juju booths to gain new animal powers

'AVIN' IT LARGE

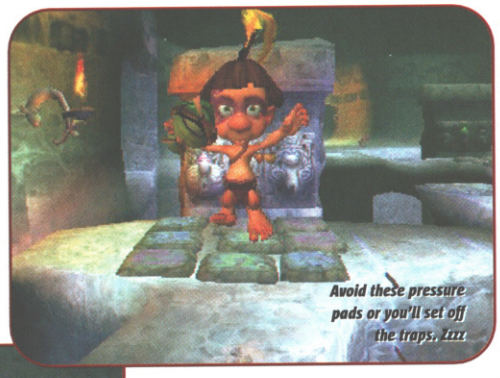
As far as the latest batch of 3D platform epics go, size is everything. Dr. Muto has large environments, while Vexx's are bigger and taller still. With its endless horizons and impressive draw-distances, Tak wants to show these up as midget games.

Zoom out high above and there's still lots of detail below

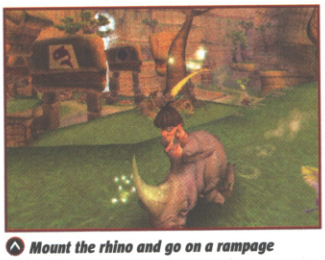
Look at how beautiful this is – and there's lots of work left to do

Despite the cute visuals, the animals generally aren't that friendly towards Tak

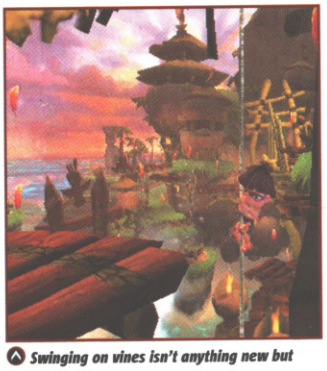
Tak's happy but the sheep seems perturbed



Avoid these pressure pads or you'll set off the traps. Zzzz



Mount the rhino and go on a rampage



Swinging on vines isn't anything new but it's pretty enough for you not to care

Use Tak's magical Juju rattle to fend off enemy lizard creatures

Here we have the first platform game to feature an accurately digitised Christine Hamilton

Take this example of a scene where you need to reach a far-off platform. In the middle of the level an orang-utan is picking bananas by pulling the top of a palm down to his level. You simply need to sneak up behind the monkey and hop on at the right time.

Things get far more complicated later, and working out which animal to use in conjunction with which item is sure to make up a lot of the fun. Tak can also use Juju magic power to transform into – or at least wear the rubber suit of – various animals. Don the chicken suit and Tak will be able to fly. Bok-ark! CVG

CVG OPINION

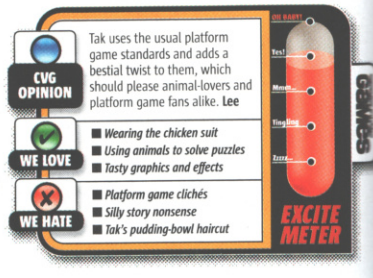
Tak uses the usual platform game standards and adds a bestial twist to them, which should please animal-lovers and platform game fans alike. **Lee**

WE LOVE

- *Wearing the chicken suit*
- *Using animals to solve puzzles*
- *Tasty graphics and effects*

WE HATE

- *Platform game clichés*
- *Silly story nonsense*
- *Tak's pudding-bowl haircut*



SPLASHDOWN 2

PUBLISHER
THQ
DEVELOPER
RAINBOW STUDIOS
OUT
SUMMER

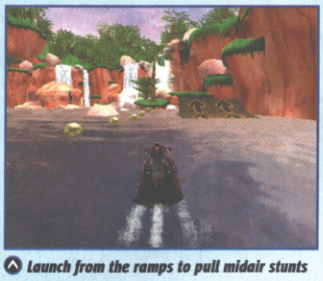
x2

IN A NUTSHELL

The sequel to the hit sea-doo racing game gets a cartoon makeover, high-intensity courses lifted straight out of a white-knuckle theme park and – thank the watery heavens – much bigger waves.

WWW.RAINBOW STUDIOS.COM

The arrival of any new extreme sports game normally has our lips quivering with trepidation. We reckon the bods at Rainbow Studios feel this way too. They've decided to drastically rework their rough-riding water game from a po-faced photo-realistic racer into a cinematic, cartoon-style white-knuckle ride.

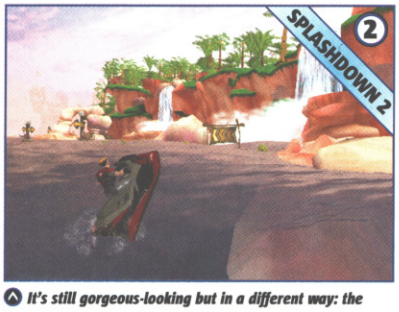


Launch from the ramps to pull midair stunts

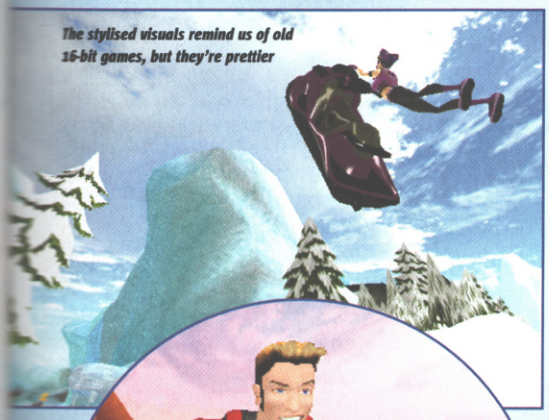
REAL VS 'HYPER-REAL'

The people at Rainbow Studios don't like the words 'cartoon-style'. Instead they choose to describe Splashdown 2's new look as 'hyper-real'. Got that? Matching the general feel of the game, the new style is definitely more fun-oriented but we're not sure if your average sea-doo nut will appreciate the switch.

The first game allowed some serious splashing to take place, with the impressive photo-realistic graphics



It's still gorgeous-looking but in a different way: the 'hyper-real' sequel looks much more like a cartoon



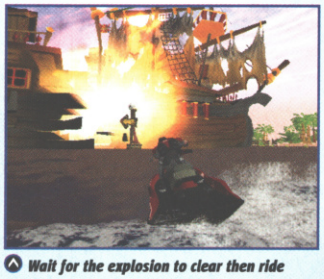
The stylised visuals remind us of old 16-bit games, but they're prettier

NEMESIS' NEMESIS

Inspired by the spectacle of the biggest and best thrill rides in the world, Splashdown 2 offers the kind of courses the Alton Towers ride managers can only dream of installing in their park. Better yet, each outdoor course features scripted events that actually influence the way you race.

In the pirate-den-like Cannonball Cove, a huge galleon will shoot cannonballs at you on the first lap, before crashing and opening up a new cavern to race through on the second lap, and then sinking to the depths and creating intense rapids to negotiate on the final lap.

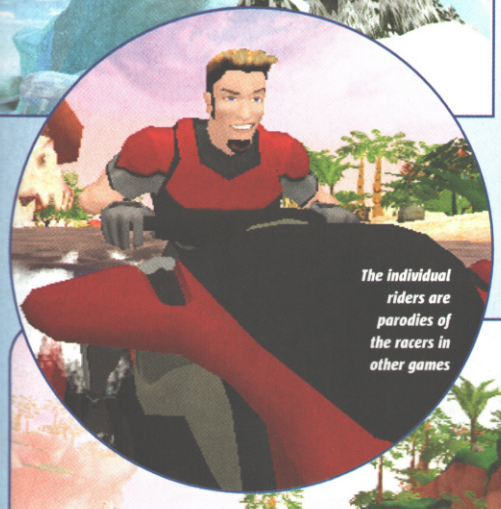
There will be over 75 stunts to impress your rivals with, more than twice the amount in the first game, and in addition to the wild outdoor tracks there are indoor courses featuring spectacular indoor stunt racing. The one criticism of the first game was that the waves weren't very wavy. Thankfully the water effects in SD2 have been much improved and the waves are now huge. CVG



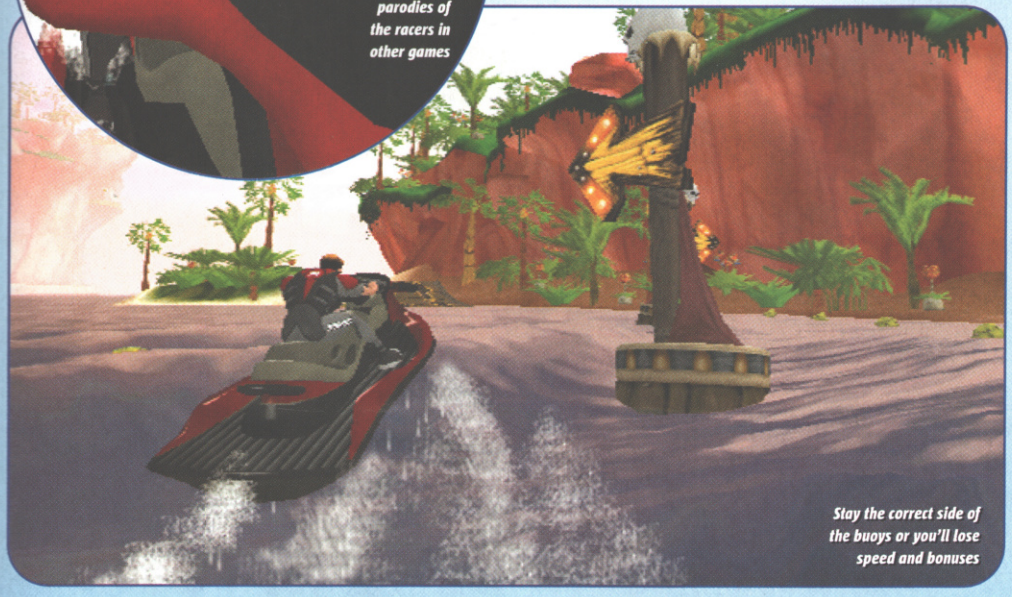
Wait for the explosion to clear then ride straight through the hole in the ship

Wobble atop your sea-doo – for fun and for more points

The water physics are in place but Rainbow Studios wants them to look better



The individual riders are parodies of the racers in other games



Stay the correct side of the buoys or you'll lose speed and bonuses

CVG OPINION

Already heaps more fun than the first game, and should provide a great escape from 'gnarly' extreme sports hell, even if it looks a bit kiddie. **Lee**

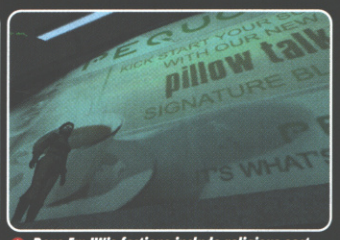
WE LOVE

- New huge waves
- Scripted race events
- It pokes fun at extreme sports

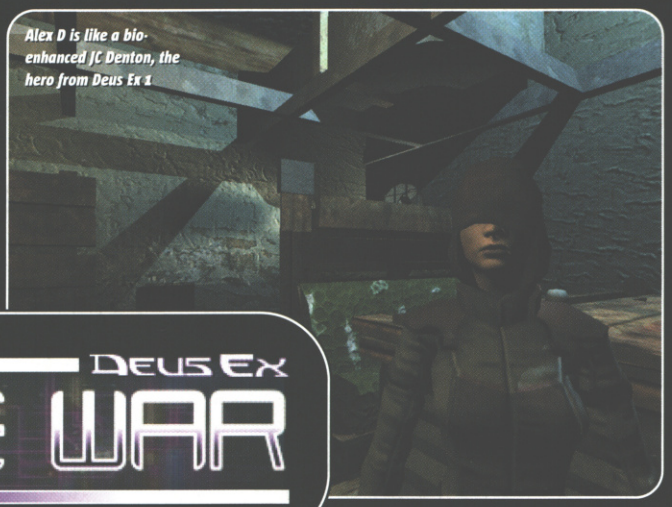
WE HATE

- Lack of four-player racing
- Cheesy course settings
- Trial-and-error racing?

Thousands of lines of dialogue are being recorded twice to give you the option of playing hero Alex D as a man or a woman

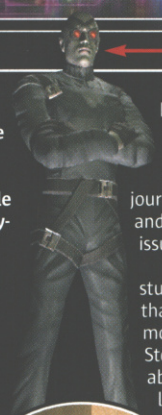


Deus Ex: IW's factions include religious sect The Order, JC Denton's, The Templars, World Trade Organisation and your initial protector TARSUS

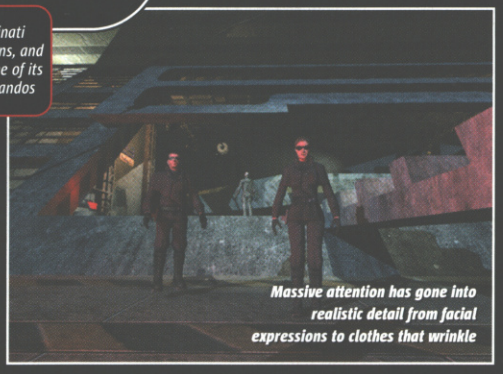


Alex D is like a bio-enhanced JC Denton, the hero from Deus Ex 1

Deus Ex Invisible War



The Illuminati faction returns, and this guy's one of its elite commandos



Massive attention has gone into realistic detail from facial expressions to clothes that wrinkle

- PUBLISHER EIDOS
- DEVELOPER ION STORM
- OUT: LATE 2003

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Ambitious role-player/FPS/action thriller sequel. You choose your role in the conspiracy-packed storyline and how you develop your character's abilities. New Unreal engine, amazing AI... it's gonna be special.

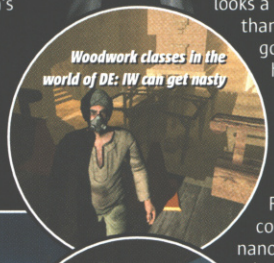
PC CD ROM XBOX PS2

WWW.DEUSEX2.COM

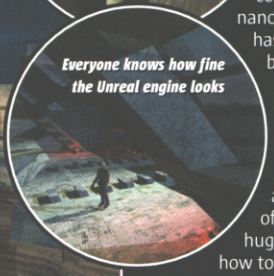
It has 'sex' in the title (kind of), has a hardcore following, drooling over pics on the Net but it's not porn. We're talking Deus Ex: Invisible War, just about the most hotly-anticipated true sequel since MGS2, and it's looking fiendishly... sexy.

Set 15 years after the multiple endings of the cracking original, the world's economy has gone down the toilet and JC Denton's superhuman nano-technology is commonplace enough for a terrorist suicide-bomber to use it to destroy Chicago, kick-starting the storyline with one hell of a bang. It's a terrifying, topical opening scenario, and the beginning of a videogame journey intended to both entertain and challenge our perceptions on issues like terrorism.

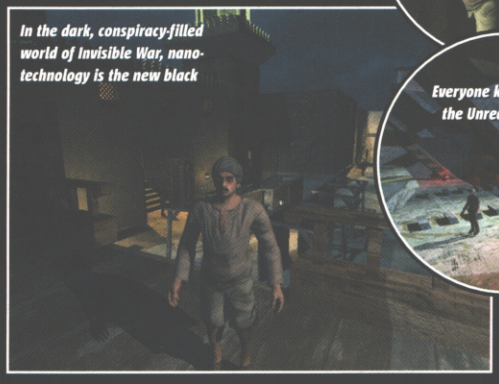
Whatever, so long as it's stuffed with more cool features than a Polar plastic surgery, has more conspiracy theories than Stop The War protesters have about Bush, Blair and Iraq, and looks a whole bunch better than the last game. The good news is that it is, it has and it makes the original look like it had visual halitosis.



Woodwork classes in the world of DE: IW can get nasty



Everyone knows how fine the Unreal engine looks



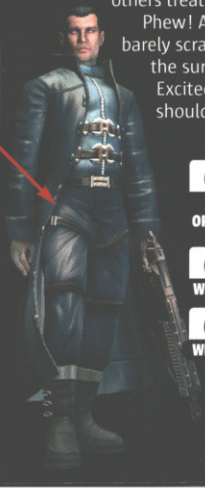
In the dark, conspiracy-filled world of Invisible War, nano-technology is the new black

The PC and Xbox versions both look stunning but the PlayStation 2 game seems to have gone AWOL for the time being

DID I MISS ANYTHING?

For starters, DE1's overly complex skill and nano-augmentation system has been replaced with bio-modification slots that each require an initial technology choice (like spy droid or better vision) and later get upgrades with added functionality. All of which gives you a huge range of choices as to how to play and develop your character. Best of all, if you mess it up, you can (at a cost) swap mods.

Nor does it matter if you missed DE1, though fans of the original will love the way the sequel develops the DE universe. From the big storyline stuff – not many details yet – to lesser matters like what happened when DE1 genetic freaks the Greasels escaped into the wild. Which you'll discover if you take time out to read the newspapers – just one of reams of interactive objects that make DE's world and its environments so rich.



JC Denton returns with his own faction, but you don't play as him. Is he a friend or foe?

DO YOU FEEL REAL?

However, sometimes nice but apparently insignificant detail like objects lying around levels and dynamic lighting are also much more than mere wallpaper. You'll need to look at what's around you and determine how best to exploit it using your bio-mods to progress through the levels, as there are usually multiple routes to complete objectives.

So you can set fire to boxes or flares to get through darkened rooms (complete with real-time shadows), duck for cover from the roving spotlights of hunter-killer droids or blow up toxic barrels before tricking enemies into the choking fumes, safe in the knowledge your bio-mods will keep you safe. What's more, such challenges aren't even scripted, so the enemy AI promises to be something special to keep up with it all.

Then there's the plot. How you play the levels is of course also dependent on how you tackle the multi-branching storylines and the different factions – your relationships with one will affect how others treat you too.

Phew! And we've barely scratched the surface. Excited yet? You should be.

The story takes you across the world

CVG OPINION

If half what we know about gets in to the finished game, the sequel's going to rocket straight into PC and Xbox's must-have classic Hall of Fame. **Pete**

WE LOVE

- Thought-provoking, great-looking
- Immersive settings and storyline
- We give up. We can't fit it all in

WE HATE

- Not knowing what's happened to the PS2 version
- No multiplayer, not even co-op

PC
CD-ROM

Highland Warriors

LEAD NATIONS - OUTMANOEUVRE ARMIES - SHAPE HISTORY - 4 CULTURES AWAIT YOUR COMMAND

MARCH 2003

NOVALOGIC®

WWW.NOVALOGIC.COM

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alter echo

■ PUBLISHER
THQ
■ DEVELOPER
OUTRAGE GAMES
■ OUT: AUTUMN

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Psychedelic and surreal action-adventure in which you morph into different forms and freeze time in a bid to defeat hordes of enemies and save the day.

XBOX

WWW.ALTERECHO.COM

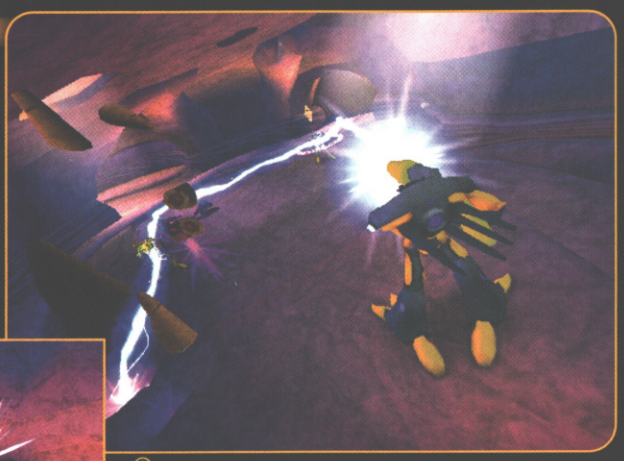
Playing Alter Echo is like having one of those lucid dreams where you're aware of what's going on, and start mucking about. One minute you're still yourself, the next you've leapt into the air, somersaulting in slow motion, leaving streamers and vapour trails in your wake. Then, before you know it, you're changing form into something only your twisted mind could conjure up.

TEST YOUR SANITY

Not everyone's lucky enough to have these types of dreams, so let Alter Echo send you to the brink of reality instead. It's a sci-fi-action-game-cum-shoot-'em-up. On an alien world you control Nevin who, over the course of the game, learns to morph into different forms and even stop the flow of time to attack enemies.

Nevin's standard form is Mêlée mode, used for hand-to-hand combat, but before long you'll be morphing into Gun mode, which transforms him into an enormous mobile gun turret, and Stealth mode, which lets you shimmy up any surface for sneaky manoeuvres.

Better still is a brand-new feature called TimeDilation. Use this to halt the flow of time, execute series of attacks and destroy enemies before they even know what's hit 'em. You want original? Alter Echo is like something beamed down from another planet, but in a good way.

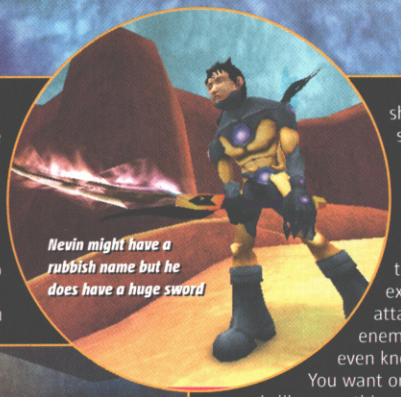


Puzzles are action-based. Here you refract laser beams through enemies

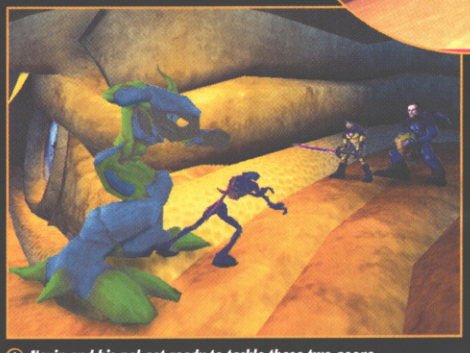
The real-time morphing effects are a sight to behold. Here Nevin's changing into Gun mode

Graphics are a mix of plain and plain weird

You can even link attacks between forms and juggle enemies high in the air



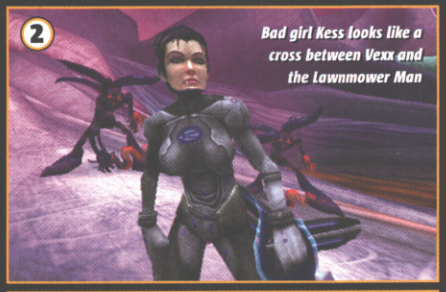
Nevin might have a rubbish name but he does have a huge sword



Nevin and his pal get ready to tackle these two goons

MY EYES! MY EYES!

If you took your eyes out and rolled them in glitter, popped them back into their sockets and then smeared Vaseline over them, you still wouldn't be close to the optical weirdness Alter Echo has in store. There are puce-purples, violent oranges, shimmering heat hazes, organic environments and the strangest enemies you've ever seen. Wear shades while you play.



CVG OPINION

Impossible to appreciate fully just by looking at the screens and reading about it. Will be a 'must-play' when it comes out, if only for the weirdness. Lee

WE LOVE

- Crazy psychedelia
- Morph and link attacks
- The amazing TimeDilation

WE HATE

- Too many primary colours
- Rhythm-action might get samey
- Current lack of visual detail

GAMES

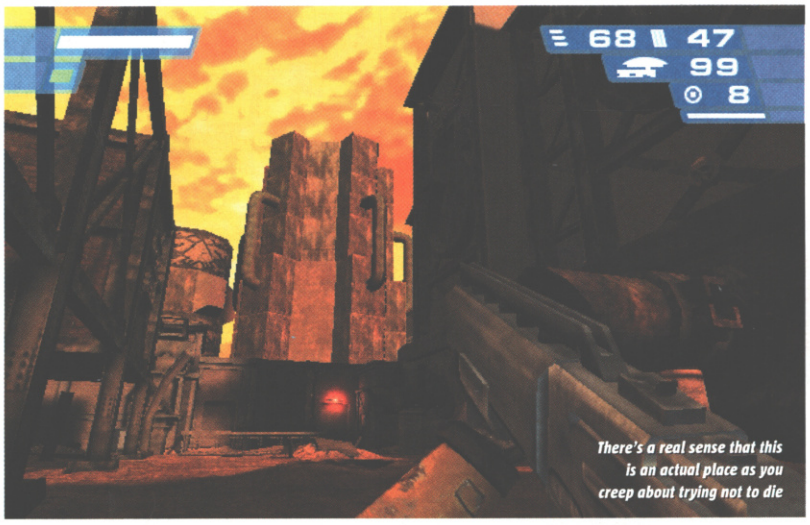
PUBLISHER THQ
DEVELOPER KUJI
OUT: AUTUMN

x8

IN A NUTSHELL

Games Workshop's first foray into the world of videogames takes the shape of a dark and creepy first-person shooter set on an alien world, deep in the scary heart of the Warhammer 40,000 universe.

WWW.THQ.COM/GAMES/MINISITEDEFAULT.ASP?UPC=46027



There's a real sense that this is an actual place as you creep about trying not to die

WARHAMMER 40,000

It's the 41st millennium, but a Utopian future filled with lush climates, world peace and lovely young ladies tending to Man's every desire is far from reality indeed. Instead, we have a scenario in which war is raging across a thousand different worlds.

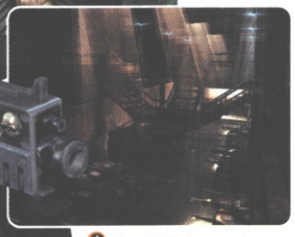
The warring races of Warhammer all star in this Games Workshop-based game, but your hero this time around is a young Tau warrior.

The surgeons of the future do it all with laser light shows

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Fire Warrior's unique hook (aside from the fact that tens of thousands of Warhammer nuts will be soiling themselves with excitement) is that the action takes place over the course of just one day. It's a gimmick but one that suggests that the story will be as important as the shooting action.

Where Fire Warrior excels is in generating a terrific atmosphere. Creeping through murky trenches in this dark vision of the future really does have the power to creep you out. There will be 17 levels of futuristic first-person horror to battle through, plus four-player deathmatching on PS2 and eight-player online play for PC owners.


Go and climb around on the impressive tanks for fun!

WHAT'S WARHAMMER?

Right, well, Warhammer 40k is the sci-fi strategy tabletop game loved by millions, in which Space Marines, bestial Orks and Imperial Guardsmen among others battle it out for galaxial supremacy. And a new videogame based on this huge franchise is well overdue.

Pop into your local Games Workshop and you might see something like this going on

But we know how we would rather be playing in the 41st Millennium!

CVG OPINION

With a strong story, creepy atmosphere and full-on action, this should set a great benchmark for future Warhammer games. **Lee**

WE LOVE
- Strong story and atmosphere
- Grimy stylised visuals
- Over 15 types of weapon

WE HATE
- Warhammer's geeky stigma
- Not online for PS2
- It made us jump too much

PUBLISHER THQ
DEVELOPER VIS
OUT: JUNE

WWW.THQ.COM/GAMES/MINISITEDEFAULT.ASP?UPC=46024&NOREDIRECT=FALSE

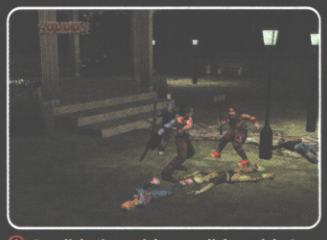
EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK

The first Evil Dead game, to all intents and purposes, took a massive zombified dump on this awesome licence. The sequel has a lot to put right, and from what we've played it could just pull the franchise back from the brink of games hell.

We've said it before but Boomstick really is just like State Of Emergency except with Deadites instead of shoppers and authentic Dearborn locations in place of Emergency's malls. What's promising is that the original movie's director Sam Raimi has had a hand in the game's development which should help ensure the finished product is far more polished than the first game. It'll be brainless, but fun.

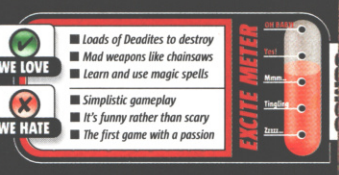
Enemies attack from all sides to challenge your sawing skillz to the maximum

The chainsaw method of losing weight is at least more instant than Weight Watchers


A walk in the park is no walk in park in A Fistful Of Boomstick, if you see what we mean

WE LOVE
- Loads of Deadites to destroy
- Mad weapons like chainsaws
- Learn and use magic spells

WE HATE
- Simplistic gameplay
- It's funny rather than scary
- The first game with a passion



INCOMING OVERLOAD!

SO MANY GAMES HAVE LANDED ON THE CVG DOORSTEP THAT WE CAN'T FIT 'EM ALL IN

■ PLAYERS 1 ■ FORMAT PC, PS2, XBOX, GC ■ ONLINE GAMING NO ■ PUBLISHER THQ (PS2, GC) UBI SOFT (PC, XBOX) ■ DEVELOPER DRAGONSTONE ■ OUT MAY ■ WWW.DRAGONSLAIR3D.COM/

DRAGON'S LAIR 3D

With the kilometre-high stacks of cartoon-style games already jostling for space out there, the original appeal of Dragon's Lair has been kind of lost by the wayside.

That said, Don Bluth's terrific characters and maniac humour should add something to this '3D' (wowzers!) puzzle-based adventure.

Walk like... an Egyptian

■ PLAYERS 1-16 ■ FORMAT PC, XBOX ■ ONLINE GAMING YES ■ PUBLISHER THQ ■ DEVELOPER CLIMAX ■ OUT MAY ■ WWW.MOTORCYCLENEWS.COM/HOME

MOTO GP2

Puke-up-yer-brekkie time

Eight racing modes alone ought to make it worth peeling back the tarpaulin and wheeling Moto GP2 out of the garage.

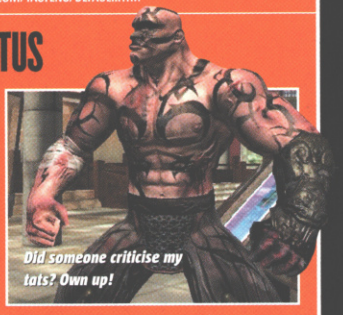
New to MGP2 are stunt and tag modes, plus a four-player split-screen option for offline multiplayer fury. The Xbox version is Live enabled, so we'll see you online, racing friends!

■ PLAYERS 1-2 ■ FORMAT XBOX ■ ONLINE GAMING NO ■ PUBLISHER MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER STUDIO GIGANTE ■ OUT SPRING ■ WWW.XBOX.COM/TAOFENG/DEFAULT.HTM

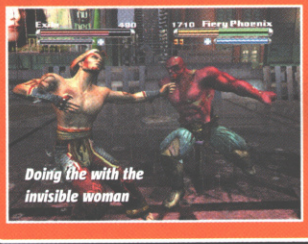
TAO FENG: FIST OF THE LOTUS

Since Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance turned out better than okay, the pressure is now on Tao Feng to deliver. There's certainly a whiff of MK about the visuals (it's John Tobias, after all), but the control method is much more technical.

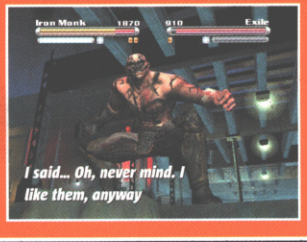
The characters and environments are so detailed that even Xbox seems to strain to keep up. But the most innovative feature is the use if Chi energy. You can channel this to make your attacks more powerful and spectacular, or use it to heal your wounds.



Did someone criticise my tats? Own up!



Doing the with the invisible woman



I said... Oh, never mind. I like them, anyway

■ PLAYERS 2 (GBA, PC) 4 (PS2, XBOX) ■ FORMAT GBA, PS2, XBOX, PC ■ ONLINE GAMING TBC ■ PUBLISHER WANADOO ■ DEVELOPER PAM DEVELOPMENT ■ OUT MAY ■ WWW.PAMDEV.COM

PRO BEACH SOCCER

Get handy with the sandy footie. How poetic

Beach football is a fast-paced version of the nation's favourite sport, played in exotic locations such as Rio de Janeiro and Bangkok.

The emphasis is on speed and dexterity so this ought to make a fun game, with lots of individual skills to show off with.

■ PLAYERS 1 ■ FORMAT PC, PS2, XBOX, GC ■ ONLINE GAMING TBC ■ PUBLISHER UBI SOFT ■ DEVELOPER UBI SOFT ■ OUT AUTUMN ■ WWW.CBS.COM/PRIMETIME/CSI/MAIN.SHTML

CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION

We love the Channel 5 TV show, for its gory detail and geek humour.

UBI Soft hasn't mentioned yet how it intends to adapt the show's in-depth problem-solving theme, but online data files seem likely. Guess we'll have to wait till we see the evidence.

Channel 5 actually gets something right

■ PLAYERS 1-8 ■ FORMAT PC ■ ONLINE GAMING YES ■ PUBLISHER MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER BIG HUGE GAMES ■ OUT APRIL ■ WWW.MICROSOFT.COM/GAMES/RISEOFNATIONS

RISE OF THE NATIONS

We're talking real-time strategy spanning 6000 years here.

You'll probably need to start a family pretty soon if you're going to make sure someone bearing your name actually reaches the end. There are many similarities to the Age Of Empires series, but it's the scale of this thing that makes the difference.

■ PLAYERS 1-2 ■ FORMAT XBOX, GC ■ ONLINE GAMING YES (XBOX LIVE) ■ PUBLISHER ACCLAIM ■ DEVELOPER CRITERION ■ OUT MAY (XBOX) GC (TBC) ■ WWW.BURNOUT2.COM

BURNOUT 2

More smoking rubber than a chain-smoker in a gimp suit

Burnout 2 is roaring its way here and it's even more stunning to look at than the PlayStation 2 original.

Criterion Games has boosted the (in)famous Crash Mode, and thrown in new designs for the custom cars. You can't race online, but there are over 60 online leader boards to compare your stats on Live.

■ PLAYERS 1 ■ FORMAT PC, XBOX ■ ONLINE GAMING TBC ■ PUBLISHER HEADFIRST ■ DEVELOPER HEADFIRST ■ OUT SUMMER ■ WWW.CALLOFCTHULHU.CO.UK/IE.PHP

CALL OF CTHULHU: DARK CORNERS OF THE EARTH

An FPS with a spooky HP Lovercraft theme – it's Silent Hill meets Medal of Honor.

You take on the role of 1920s Private Investigator, Jack Walters and must struggle to contain your sanity while sneaking around or shooting Lovecraftian ghouls. Shiver.

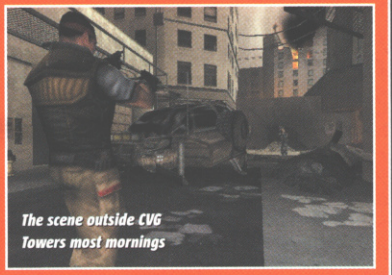
You'd rather be dead than endure that décor

■ PLAYERS 1-16 ■ FORMAT GC, PC, XBOX ■ ONLINE GAMING YES ■ PUBLISHER THQ ■ DEVELOPER CRANKY PANTS (GC), OUTRAGE GAMES (XBOX, PC) ■ OUT APRIL (XBOX, GC), JUNE (PC) ■ WWW.REDFACTION2.COM

RED FACTION 2

Enhanced versions of this first-person shooter look set to rile all those PS2 snobs.

The GameCube, PC and Xbox versions of Red Faction 2 have all been graced with improved texture resolution. Also exclusive to GameCube are customised animations and snazzier lighting. PC and Xbox, meanwhile, get exclusive multiplayer maps and character models.

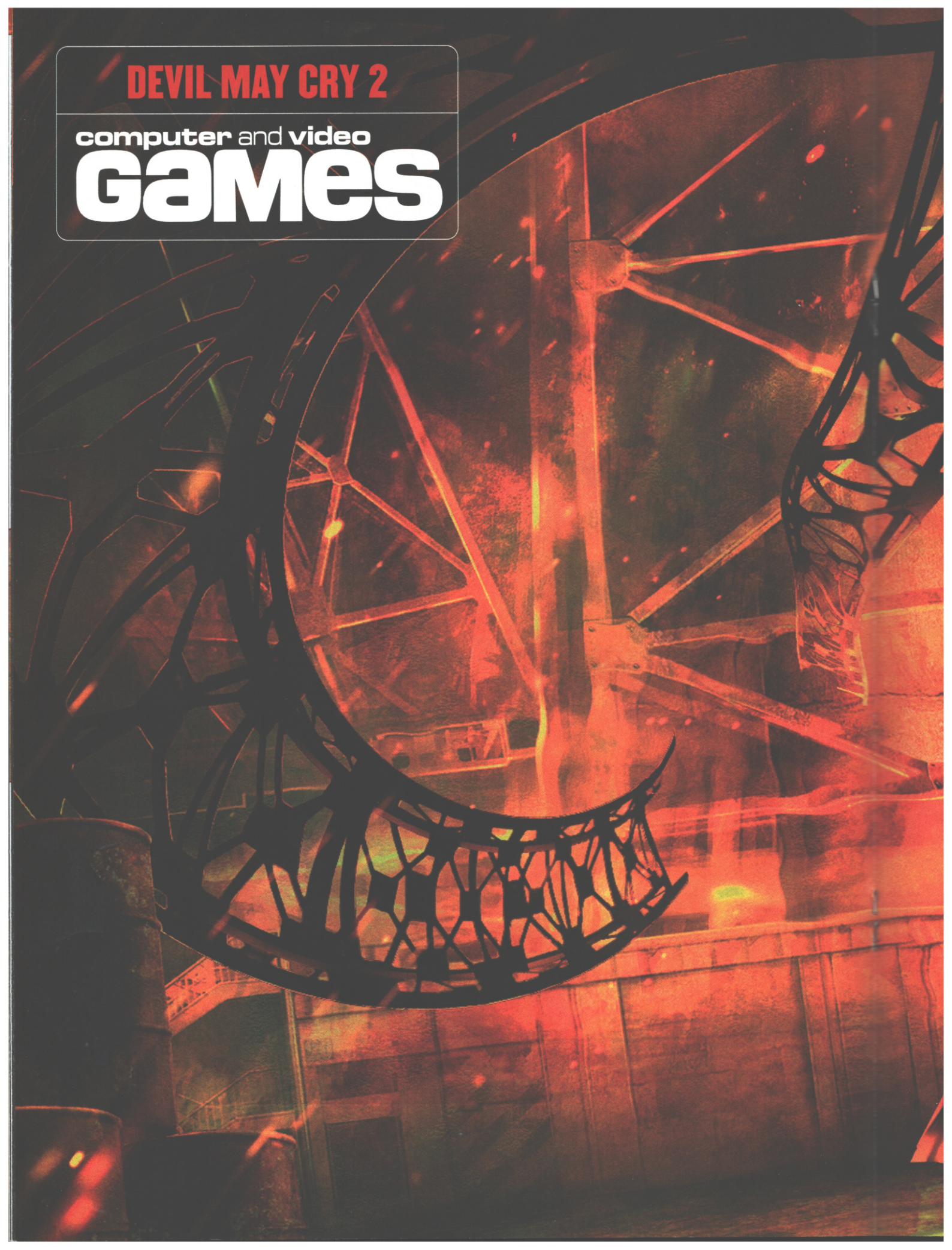


The scene outside CVG Towers most mornings

SILENT HILL 3

DEVIL MAY CRY 2

computer and video
games



computer and video
GAMES

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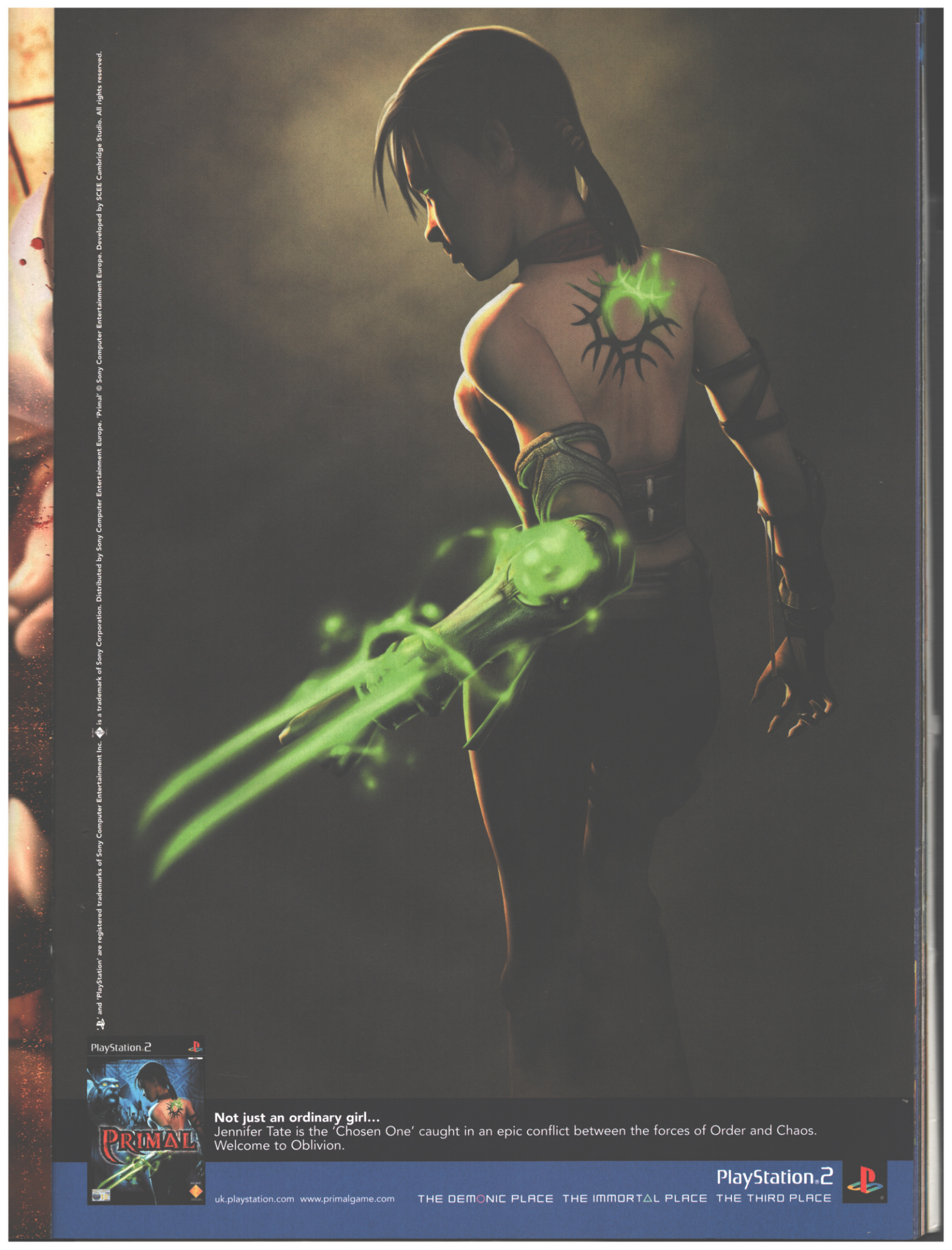

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CHALLENGE CVG

BY 'ECK! IT'S GRIM OOP NORFF, INT IT!

A MAN FROM THE NORTH, REALM OF WHIPPETS AND HOLLANDS PIES, TRAVELS ABROAD... TO LONDON

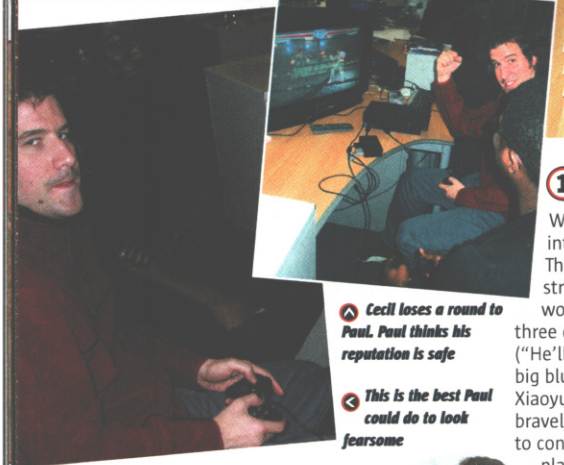
YOU SUVVERN PUFF! YOU NORVEN...ER!

To improve international relations this month, we allowed a visitor from outside of London into the hallowed halls of CVG. The home of videogames.

Cecil Ashitey, aka The Huddersfield Harrier (pronounced th' 'uddersfieuld 'arrier) put on his best clogs and cloth cap for the journey. It took him four days by horse ('orss).

Apparently Cecil is champion at Tekken 4. Which doesn't mean he's the best. You see up north the word 'champion' means 'very well, thank you'. Any road up, let's see what we can see, shall we...

Paul plays Tekken like the Queen rides a horse: side saddle. What a fool, eh!



Cecil loses a round to Paul. Paul thinks his reputation is safe

This is the best Paul could do to look fearsome

1 I'M GUNNA BLUDDY BRAIN YER

We had to recruit Paul for this to act as interpreter, him being from Lancashire. The two norv'ners chatted in their strange language and we eventually worked out that this would be a best-of-three competition. Cecil chose Hwoarang. ("He'll give yer a raaaght duffin over with big blummin' kicks.") Paul went with Ling Xiaoyu, "because she's unpredictable." Paul bravely cartwheeled about the place trying to confuse Cecil. When they finally got to playing Tekken 4, Cecil showed no mercy and took the first round, no bother.

2 WELL A'LL GO TO T' FOOT UV OOR STUURZ

It's very hilly up north, so Cecil had the advantage in the uneven-floored stages. He deftly manoeuvred Paul Phoenix here and there, making Paul's Ling look like "a right burke" in the process. Part way through the second round Huddersfield's greatest gladiator must've been thinking of chips and gravy, though, because he lost to Paul. However our man didn't get to celebrate for long because, back from the land of meaty goodness, came Cecil with a Perfect. We made a note of this in Davies's file!

Compared to Huddersfield, London is like Florida!

The battle rages on. Paul's Ling Xiaoyu 'skills' just couldn't cut it in the end

3 SITHEE LATER, YER BIG WET LETTICES!

"Living down ere uz made yer too soft, pal!" Cecil started undermining Paul's sense of general wellbeing with cruel observations. Through his tears of misery Paul bravely soldiered on, trying to remember Kazuya's old 10-hit combos and getting his timing of reversals all wrong. Cecil was all over Kazuya like green on mushy peas. We ought to drive to Ilky Moor and leave Paul there with no hat for punishment!

WINNER: VISITORS ON ILKY MOOR BAHT 'AT...

And so our resident Tekken champ was completely and utterly destroyed by the northern visitor, whose hands were still thawing from the cold. We gave Cecil three T-shirts to wear beneath his hand-knitted tank top, and £1 to buy some cough sweets and a bottle of Dandelion & Burdock when he got back home. Paul just couldn't be consoled. We overheard him on the phone later in the day, moaning to his mates about how he wasn't really ready or anything and yadda, yadda, yadda... Shocking!

CHALLENGE SPECIAL

We've something extra special lined up for next month, so we don't have to be humiliated by you pesky lot. But still keep writing in with your suggestions for challenges. We'll make it worth your while, don't worry. And if you can give us a good enough reason to visit your town we might just make the journey. Whatever, fill in this form if you're tough enough!

HELLO, MY NAME IS: .....

BUT YOU MUST CALL ME..... [nickname]

AND I'M ..... [age]

I AM THE BEST AT: ..... [game name]

MY ADDRESS IS:.....

.....

DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: .....

EVENING TELEPHONE NO: .....

EMAIL: .....

Send to: CVG Reader Challenge, CVG magazine, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD

TESSERACTION GAMES

ENIGMA: RISING TIDE™

IT'S A DIFFERENT WORLD

- Join one of three dynamic factions: United States, Imperial Germany, or the League of Free Nations.
- Pilot submarines, corvettes, destroyers, armed merchantmen, battleships, cruisers and more.
- Real-time cinematic action.
- Voice-activated command and control of your vessel.
- Real-time weather and environmental factors.
- Dynamically assigned missions based on strategic priorities.
- Evolving alternate history backstory.

"Debut Game of the Year - Enigma: Rising Tide"

-- IGN Action Vault Awards ign.com

"There is nothing like watching a torpedo rip open a slow-moving merchantman or tanker, or the feel of eluding a destroyer's depth charge run by doing a quick surface-to-torpedo depth and firing all tubes in a spread that sends her to the bottom. The game's directional sound effects are topnotch: the pinging of sonar, the whirring of torpedoes as they speed by, and the clanking and creaking as your sub prepares to dive. And, the game also recognizes voice commands, making it possible to play Rising Tide totally hands free!"

-- Gamespy.com

www.enigma-game.com

-- GAMESPOT 9/10

-- GAMES REVIEW 9.2/10

www.runaway-game.com

Runaway

A ROAD ADVENTURE

All titles available at:

GAME

www.game.uk.com

Enigma Rising Tide | Global Power | Heath | Napoleon's Battles | Runaway | The Watchmaker

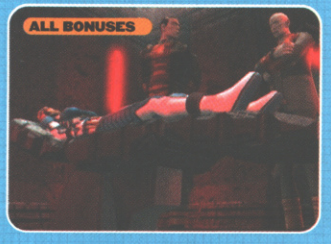
gmx media

www.gmxmedia.ne

GET THE MOST OUT OF THE GAMES YOU'VE GOT

EXTENDED PLAY

Getting lost in London's mean streets in The Getaway? Shooting some way off target in Metroid Prime? Consult our killer tips and *cheat* your way to glory! Practising's for wimps



BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA

Enter the following codes as your name. If you want to use more than one code at a time, just input them back to back.

Level select	!EVAH!
Invincibility	B4K42
All bonuses	105770Y2

PANZER DRAGOON ORTA

● ORIGINAL SATURN GAME

Finish Panzer Dragoon Orta or play for more than five hours to unlock the original Panzer Dragoon game from the Pandora's Box option.

● BOX GAME OPTION

Finish the game on hard or play for more than 15 hours to unlock the Box game option.

● PANZER DRAGOON (ORIGINAL)

The following cheats are for the original version of the game once you've unlocked it. Tap them in at the main menu. A message will confirm correct code entry.

● INVINCIBLE MODE

Left, Left, Right, Right, Up, Down, Left, Right.

● EPISODE SELECT

Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, X, Y, White.

● EPISODE 0

Up, Up, Up, Down, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right.

● WIZARD MODE

Left, Right, Left, Right, Up, Down, Up, Down, Left, Right.

● VIEW NORMAL ENDING SEQUENCE

Up, Up, Down, Up, Right, Right, Left, Right, Down, Down, Up, Down, Left, Left, Right, Left.

● VIEW HARD DIFFICULTY ENDING SEQUENCE

Up, Up, Down, Up, Left, Left, Right, Left, Down, Down, Up, Down, Right, Right, Left, Right.

● UNLIMITED CONTINUES

Up, X, Right, Y, Down, White, Left, Y, Up, X.

● RED SEGA POLYGON MAN

Up, X, Right, Y, Down, White, Left, Y, Up, X.

METAL GEAR SOLID 2 SUBSTANCE

● Nearly every guard in the main game has a dog tag that you can get (and don't forget the bosses). To get all the tags you'll need to finish the game on each difficulty. Some guards need to be shot in the leg with either the SOCOM or USP first. Here's how to get a tag:

● First find a guard and wait until his back is turned. Sneak up behind him.

● If you've put a guard to sleep, wake them by using the Coolant Spray or by picking them up and dropping them a lot.

● Go into first-person view and point your gun at the back of his head.

● The guard will put his hands up. Keep the fire button held down, leave first-person and hold the aim button.

● Run in front of the guard and re-enter first-person mode. Point your gun at his head or crotch.

● The guard should then drop his dog tag. If he doesn't, shoot him in the leg first.

● In the Tanker with Snake get 30 tags for an Infinite Ammo Bandanna and 60 tags for Stealth Camo. Start a new game to use them.

● In the Plant with Raiden get 80 for Infinite Ammo wig, 120 for Stealth Camo, 150 for Infinite Grip wig and all for Infinite Oxygen wig.

METROID PRIME

● HARD MODE

Finish the game to unlock Hard Mode.

● IMAGE GALLERY 1

Scan and download 50% of the log book.

● IMAGE GALLERY 2

Scan and download 100% of the log book.

● IMAGE GALLERY 3

Beat the game on Hard Mode.

● IMAGE GALLERY 4

Get all the pick-ups including all the Missile Expansions, Energy Tanks and Power Bomb Expansions.

● PLAY METROID

Complete Metroid Fusion on GBA and then connect your GBA to your GC.

● METROID FUSION SUIT

Finish Metroid Prime and then connect your GBA with Fusion.

SPYRO: SEASON OF ICE

Quickly tap in the following codes at the Press Start screen.

YOUR BEST TIPS

If you've got a star-quality tip that you want to share or if you'd like our resident expert Barny to answer a query, send it into us at:

CVGTIPS@DENNIS.CO.UK

THE DOGHOUSE,
COMPUTER AND VIDEOGAMES,
DENNIS PUBLISHING,
30 CLEVELAND STREET,
LONDON W1T 4JD

● LEVEL PORTALS OPENED

Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Up, Down, A .

● 99 LIVES

Left, Right, Right, Right, Down, Up, Right, Up, A.

● WARP

Left, Right, Right, Left, Up, Left, Left, Right, A.

● UNLOCK ALL LEVELS

Down, Down, Up, Up, Left, Right, Up, Down, A.

THE GETAWAY

The following secret cars were sent in by Jones from Portsmouth. Beat the game to unlock Free Roam Mode then follow the directions below to find the secret cars. A London A-Z will also help.

● SAAB 9X

In the underground carpark at the end of Gerrard Street (main China Town street)

● ARMOURED CAR

Behind a fence on Birdcage Walk.

● NISSAN SKYLINE

Behind some boxes in Bermondsey Street, near Tower Bridge.

● MKII

Drive to Tower Bridge and find St Thomas Street. The MKII is in the left carpark.

● GOLF BUGGY

Enter Hyde Park at Speakers Corner and find an open grassy area. The buggy should be behind some bushes in the corner.

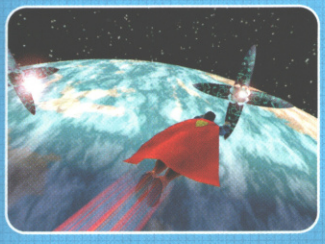
REIGN OF FIRE

● MASTER CODE
Tap X, Y, White, Black, X, Y, X at the main menu.

● INVINCIBLE
Tap White, X, Y, Black, X, Y, Black during gameplay.

● LEVEL SKIP
Tap X, Black, Y, Black, X, White, Y during gameplay.

● DOUBLE DAMAGE
Tap X, Black, X, Y, X, White, X during gameplay.



SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL

The following codes need to be entered quickly while the game is paused. A sound will confirm correct entry.

● MASTER CODE
Right, Black, Y, Black, L, White.

● UNLIMITED HEALTH
Black, White, Left, X, Left, White.

● X-RAY GRAPHICS
Left, Left, Right, Left, Y, X, White, Black, Black, White.

● FREEZE GRAPHICS
Right, Left, Black, White, Left, Y, Y, Black, Right, White.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON

● SUPERMAN
Tap L1, R2, L2, R1, Select at the pause menu.

● MISSIONS
Tap X, L2, Triangle, R2, Select at the main menu.

● SPECIAL FEATURES
Tap L1, L2, R1, R2, X, Select at the main menu.

SERIOUS SAM

● CHEAT MENU
At the main menu click down on the left analog stick and then press Black, White, Y. The cheat option should then appear.

● MENTAL MODE
Complete the game on Serious Mode to unlock Mental Mode.

TOMB RAIDER: THE PROPHECY

Level passwords sent in by George, London.

Level 1:	PRLD
Level 2:	GAZE
Level 3:	MEDI
Level 4:	HAXE
Level 5:	PATH
Level 6:	BONE
Level 7:	TREE
Level 8:	LINK
Level 9:	KURZ
Level 10:	HELL
Level 11:	WEFX
Level 12:	MEMO
Level 13:	HEAR
Level 14:	FITZ
Level 15:	ELRC
Level 16:	CLIK
Level 17:	MGSL
Level 18:	ROMA
Level 19:	MONK
Level 20:	AEON
Level 21:	TIME
Level 22:	OLIM
Level 23:	LAND
Level 24:	DART
Level 25:	HILL
Level 26:	CHEX
Level 27:	STLK
Level 28:	MECH
Level 29:	ARKD
Level 30:	MUSH
Level 31:	LITH

REALLY STUCK?

Absolutely stumped on a game? Ridiculed by your mates? There is hope:

THE COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES TIPS HELPLINE.

0906 466 4659

Open seven days a week, 8am-11pm. On the very rare occasion that they can't help, your query will be passed on to a support team, who guarantees to find you an answer within 24 hours. Calls cost £1.50 per minute at all times. Charges will appear on your standard telephone bill. If you do not pay the bill yourself, seek permission from whoever does before calling. In case of problems, please call Customer Services on 0870 800 6155.

BARNY'S PROBLEM CORNER

Is your brow furrowing into a deep crease? Allow Barny to sort out all your problems. Although he's not much cop at girl questions

MORROWIND THE ELDER SCROLLS III

Q. I've heard that you can build your own stronghold in Morrowind by joining one of the great houses but I'm not sure which one to join. I tried before saving to join the one in Ald'ruhn but I did not get a stronghold.

A. *To get yourself a stronghold you have to complete all the missions given to you by members of the House Redoran. You will have to finish about 15 of these before you get the opportunity to build your own stronghold. Once you get to the stronghold missions, your contact in House Redoran will instruct you how to proceed. This will result in four more missions until the stronghold is complete. It takes a great deal of effort to finish this but the result is well worth the effort and money.*

GRAND THEFT AUTO VICE CITY

Q. I'm really stuck on the mission where you have to do all the roof-top jumps after you buy the film studio. I think the mission is called G-Spotlight. I always fall off buildings or otherwise my bike just gets too damaged and blows up. Do you have a guide that I can follow or any good cheats to skip this stupid mission?
David from Scotland

A. *Before you start this mission make sure you know where you can get a helicopter (not one of the checkpoint ones). If you're not sure, look on top of the Police Station, on top of the Hyman Condo if you've bought it or on top of the building to the right after coming off the bridge from Prawn Island. Once you've got one, start the mission and do the first few jumps as normal on the bike. Once you've gone through the building you can get off the bike and into a helicopter. Now use the helicopter to go through each of the checkpoints to get to the final marker. Land next to it and then go through on foot to complete the mission.*

SPLINTER CELL

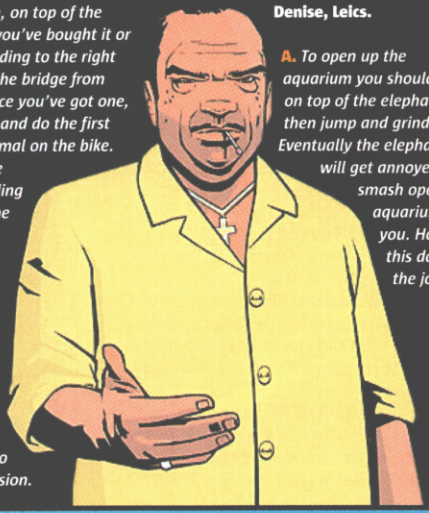
Q. This game is really hard. I am stuck near the start on the level where you have to get inside the CIA building without killing anybody. Problem is I am still outside and don't have a clue where I'm supposed to go. Cheers.
Bob

A. *Make your way along the fence on the left. You've got less than two minutes to make it. Climb into the fenced in area. Get in between the two walls and do a double jump up to a ledge. Get up and open the grate. Move past the fan blades to access the interior of the building.*

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

Q. I have watched my husband play nearly all the way through TH4 but we've got no idea how to get in the aquarium in the zoo level. He thinks it's got something to do with the elephant but the thing just won't move. Please, please let me know so I can pretend I know how and hope he does not see this letter when he reads the mag!
Denise, Leics.

A. *To open up the aquarium you should get on top of the elephant and then jump and grind on it. Eventually the elephant will get annoyed and smash open the aquarium for you. Hope this does the job.*



METROID PRIME PLAYER'S GUIDE

Barny Zoeller shows you where to find all of Metroid's Missile Expansions, Energy Tanks and Power Bomb Expansions

1 ENERGY TANKS

CHOZO RUINS

● **1. TRANSPORT ACCESS NORTH:** After beating the Hive Mecha boss and collecting the Missile Launcher, blast the door in the Hive Totem room to get inside.

● **2. MAIN PLAZA:** After getting the Morph Ball and Missile Launcher, return to the Hive Totem room and enter Transport Access North. Roll through the tunnel to Transport to Magmoor Caverns North and go right. Follow the route to a ledge in the Main Plaza where the tank is.

● **3. FURNACE:** You need the Morph Ball Bomb ability for this. Take the upper entrance in the Gathering Hall through East Atrium and Energy Core Access to the Energy Core. Go though the left tunnel and turn into the Morph Ball in front of the Stone Toad. Plant a bomb to access a new room. Use the Morph Ball Slot then the other two in the Energy Core to reach a high door to the Furnace where the tank is.

● **4. HALL OF THE ELDERS:** After unlocking three different coloured holes shoot the white one with the Ice Beam then bomb it. The statue can now throw you to a new area.

● **5. CHOZO RUINS:** Training Chamber. Kill the ghosts then use the half pipe to bomb the slots. One of them releases an elevator that leads to the Energy Tank.

MAGMOOR CAVERNS

● **6. TRANSPORT TUNNEL A:** You need the Varia Suit and Missiles and Morph Ball Bombs. Use Transport to Magmoor Caverns East then head to the Monitor Station and take the opposite exit to Transport Tunnel A. You need to do some tricky double Bomb Jumps (while on platforms that disintegrate) to reach the highest point where the tank is.

● **7. MAGMOOR WORKSTATION:** You can reach this area after you've killed Thardis (rock boss) by using the Spider Ball to reach the high exit. In Magmoor Workstation use the Thermal Visor and Wave Beam three symbols. Then roll under the grating and cool a series of lava channels until you reach the one with the tank in.

TALLON OVERWORLD

● **8. CARGO FREIGHT LIFT TO DECK GAMMA:** This room is inside the crashed frigate. You need to shoot the glass with a missile to expose a small room with the tank in.

● **9. HYDRA ACCESS TUNNEL:** This room is inside the crashed frigate. In the underwater Morph Ball Maze after you drop down for the first time, do a difficult triple Bomb Jump (lay the second bomb just before you reach the maximum height from the first burst then repeat) to reach the tank at the top on the left.

PHENDRANA DRIFTS

● **10. RUINED COURTYARD:** Use the Wave Beam on the high purple door in the Ice Ruins West to reach the courtyard. Activate both Spinner slots then place a bomb in the slot above. Quickly jump across the platforms and into the yellow hole to get the tank.

● **11. RESEARCH LAB AETHER:** Inside a containment tank. Shoot the glass to get the tank.

PHAZON MINES

● **12. VENTILATION SHAFT:** Use the Power Bomb on the floor grating and get in the hole. On the other side you need to scan the panel to get rid of the poison. This also reveals the Energy Tank.

● **13. TRANSPORT ACCESS:** Use the Plasma Beam to shoot the ice in this tunnel.

● **14. PROCESSING CENTER ACCESS:** This room is accessible after you beat Omega Pirate.

Each Tank provides you with an extra 100-health capacity. You'll find this very handy for those long boss fights later

Bear in mind, though, that you won't be able to get most of them until you have acquired certain items beforehand

Some you will find are very close to the start but you will need to back-track later in the game to get them

2 POWER BOMB EXPANSIONS

● **1. CHOZO RUINS:** Magma Pool. Grapple-Beam your way over the lava then Power-Bomb the wall on the other side.

● **2. MAGMOOR CAVERNS:** Warrior Shrine. Plant a Power Bomb at the base of the statue in order to open up hidden area.

● **3. PHENDRANA DRIFTS:** Ice Ruins West. From the Courtyard Entryway, Space-Jump to the nearest roof and then jump to the corner roof. Blast the ice on the roof with the Plasma Beam and drop down.

● **4. PHENDRANA DRIFTS:** Security Cave. This is accessible via a tunnel on the highest level of Phendrana's Edge. You will need to Grapple and Space-Jump to get there.

Being able to blow up walls will open up new areas

3 MISSILE EXPANSIONS

CHOZO RUINS

1. RUINED GALLERY: Shoot a missile at the odd-looking piece of wall.
2. BURN DOME: Beat the Incinerator Drone then Morph-Bomb the odd-looking piece of wall.
3. WATERY HALL ACCESS: Shoot the wall at the bottom of the ramp with a missile.
4. DYNAMO: Shoot the grate with a missile.
5. RUINED SHRINE: Morph-Ball-Bomb the blocked hole.
6. RUINED NURSERY: Morph-Ball-Bomb the grey blocks in the wall to reach it.
7. CHOZO RUINS: Ruined Gallery. Bomb-Jump into the tunnel.
8. VAULT: Use Double Bomb Jumps to plant a bomb inside all three rings to open the gate.
9. MAIN PLAZA: Use the Boost Ball in the half pipe.
10. RUINED SHRINE: Use the Boost Ball in the half pipe.
11. GATHERING HALL: By the entrance to the East Atrium are two red blocks. Stand on the right one and space jump up. Blow the grate with a bomb.
12. MAIN PLAZA: Get on the platform above the door to Ruined Shrine Access and shoot the nearby tree with a Super Missile to reveal the expansion.
13. RUINED FOUNTAIN: When the fountain sprays water get in Morph Ball form and let it shoot you to the ceiling where you can grab a rail leading to the power-up.
14. DYNAMO: Use the Spider Track.
15. CROSSWAY: Accessed from the Furnace. Inside, destroy the cordite on the far side then use Boost Ball in the half pipe to reach the rail and bomb the slot at the end. Do the same for the other side then fall off and get on the piston.
16. WATERY HALL: In the water is a small alcove. Morph-Ball inside and then space-jump out to get the Expansion.
17. Furnace: Power-Bomb the cracked area on the floor then use the half pipe to boost up to a Spider Track. Follow the tricky path of Spider Tracks to reach the Expansion.
18. TRAINING CHAMBER ACCESS: Morph-Ball under the red leaves to find a secret tunnel.
19. MAIN PLAZA: From the exit from the Piston Tunnel, Space-Jump towards the Grapple Point and Grapple to the far side.

To get all of these requires almost every piece of equipment you can find

MAGMOOR CAVERNS

20. STORAGE CAVERN: Go under the grating in the Triclops Pit to reach the Storage Cavern.
21. FIERY SHORES: After going through the small hole shoot the crates and Morph-Ball along the route until you reach the expansion.
22. TRICLOPS PIT: Stand by the crates nearest the Pit Tunnel and use the X-Ray Visor to spot a hidden platform in mid-air. Space-Jump over, then Space-Jump across two more. On the third shoot the pillar ahead with a missile to reveal the Expansion.

Getting through the lava caves is a pain

TALLON OVERWORLD

23. LANDING SITE: Morph-Ball into the low weed-filled cave located near to the ship.
24. TRANSPORT TUNNEL B: Underneath the bridge.
25. OVERGROWN CAVERN: After getting the Icebeam, head through the opposite door and use the transporter.
26. FRIGATE CRASH SITE: Space-Jump onto some branches in the water and then jump into an underwater niche on the left, where you will see it.
27. BIOHAZARD CONTAINMENT: Inside the crashed frigate. Look for a cordite door in the water and blast open with Super Missiles.
28. LIFE GROVE TUNNEL: In the Morph Ball Maze use the Boost Ball to reach the highest part and plant a bomb to get an expansion.
29. GREAT TREE CHAMBER: In the Great Tree Hall use the X-Ray Visor to find a hidden platform floating in mid-air. Use it to reach the blue door that leads to the Great Tree Chamber.
30. ROOT CAVE: Get to the highest point of the cave after using the Grapple. Use the X-Ray Visor to locate some invisible platforms. Use these to get even higher. Examine the wall on the last one. You'll see a niche with the Expansion in.
31. ARBOUR CHAMBER: After getting 43 use the X-Ray Visor to reach the red door. Shoot it with the Plasma Beam and get the expansion inside.

Return to your ship to save and pick up stuff

PHENDRANA DRIFTS

32. RESEARCH LAB AETHER: On a tiny catwalk just below the ceiling.
33. PHENDRANA SHORELINE: Use Super Missiles to shoot the statue to the left of the door leading to Temple Entryway. Scan what's behind then Spider Ball up the rails that are revealed.
34. ICE RUINS EAST: Make your way up the sides of the area and cross the broken bridge. Find the rails on the other side and Spider-Ball up.
35. RESEARCH LAB HYDRA: Shoot the pillar on the top floor with a Super Missile to reveal the expansion.
36. QUARANTINE MONITOR: Use the Grapple points in the Quarantine Cave to reach the far platform. Go through the tunnel to the new room.
37. PHENDRANA SHORELINES: Examine the low pillar near the save room. The expansion is behind some ice. Blast it with the Plasma Beam.
38. ICE RUINS EAST: On the ground near the Plaza Walkway door is some ice. Melt it with the Plasma Beam and go through.
39. FROST CAVE: Use the Grapple point on the Glider to reach the highest ledge in the cave. Look up and shoot the stalactite on the ceiling with a missile. When it falls it will makes a hole in the ice, allowing you to reach the expansion

40. GRAVITY CHAMBER: Shoot the icicles on the ceiling with the Plasma Beam then use the Grapple point to reach the expansion.

PHAZON MINES

41. MAIN QUARRY: Activate the crane controls then use the Spider Ball to reach the missile expansion.
42. ELITE RESEARCH: Use the cannon to blow a hole in the left wall.
43. ELITE CONTROL ACCESS: Shoot the explosive crate opposite from the door to the elevator. Jump over and Bomb-Jump to get it.
44. SECURITY ACCESS A: Blow the grate with a Power Bomb.
45. METROID QUARANTINE A: Use X-Ray Visor to get across the phazon pit. Then use it again to reach a ledge with a Spider Ball Track. Use a Power Bomb on the wall. Use another in the cave then ride across the new Spider Ball Track. Use the X-Ray Visor to see another platform that takes you to the expansion.
46. FUNGAL HALL ACCESS: Morph-Ball under the largest mushroom.
47. FUNGAL HALL B: Under the door to Quarantine Access B is a circle of tiny mushrooms. Plant a Power Bomb in the middle to reveal the expansion.
48. METROID QUARANTINE B: Switch off the force field then use a Super Missile on the cordite tank on the right.
49. PHAZON PROCESSING CENTER: Jump up on to the third floating platform and use your X-Ray Visor to spot a normally hidden platform. Jump to another and then Space-Jump to a ledge against the side. Use a Power Bomb to break open the wall.

Each Expansion allows you to carry an extra five missiles

Being able to carry an extra 245 rockets might seem stupid at first but you're really gonna need them for later bosses

RESIDENT EVIL 0 PLAYER'S GUIDE

Barny Zoeller shows you where all the important items are and what they can do for you once you've got your hands on 'em

1 TRAIN

● DINING CAR KEY
At the start, go to the end of the train where you will find this next to a body. It unlocks the door in the starting carriage.

● CONDUCTOR'S KEY
This is in the Dining Car after you fall through the hole in the roof. Use the lift to send it up to your team-mate who will then be able use it on the Conductor's Office near to the front of the train.

● BRIEFCASE
Inside the Conductor's Office in the cupboard. Combine it with the Gold and Silver Rings to open it. Inside is the Blue Keycard.

● ICE PICK
Climb the ladder in the Conductor's Office and go through the bar. The Pick is in the next section. Put this in the lift of the Dining car so the trapped character can use it to pick the lock.

● PANEL OPENER
This will be on the floor of the bar after beating the scorpion boss. Use it to open the floor hatch in the kitchen part of the Dining Car.

● GOLD RING
This is in the Freight car near to where some zombie dogs attack towards the rear of the train. Combine this (and the Silver Ring) with the Briefcase from the Conductor's Office.

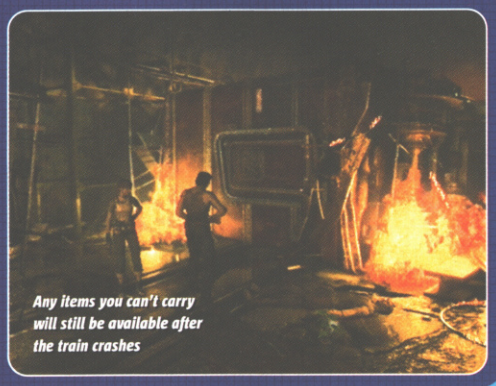
● HOOKSHOT
On the outside after the Freight Car. Use one team-mate to pull the release lever while the other grabs if off the wall. Use it to get onto the roof through the window in the second passenger carriage.

● SILVER RING
You will find this inside the Jewellery Box (examine it to open) which is in the upper cabin after you use the Hookshot to access the roof. Combine this and the Gold Ring with the Briefcase in order to get the Magnetic Card.

● BLUE KEYCARD
This can be found inside the Briefcase. Use it on the door close to the Conductor's Office.

● MAGNETIC CARD
This is in the front of the train inside the train steer/control room. The card enables the rear brake panel to activate after you input one of the codes (36 = 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 2, 2, 1, 1. 67 = 9, 9, 9, 9, 9, 5, 5, 5, 5, 2. 81 = 9, 9, 9, 9, 9, 9, 9, 9, 8, 1).

You need to work as a team to retrieve the Hookshot



Any items you can't carry will still be available after the train crashes

2 TRAINING FACILITY AND FACILITY BASEMENT

● MICROFILM A
From the main hall enter the double doors upstairs (near the statue) into the Conference Room. Go through the single door then through the next doors into a study. Microfilm A is in the corner. Use it with Microfilm B to get the code to unlock the...

● CRANK HANDLE
Go through the single door on the upper left-hand side of the main hall. It's in the cabinet. Have Billy use it on the winch control for the lift in the study while Rebecca stands on the lift, which allows her to gain access to the room above.

● WHITE STATUE
From the main hall enter the first upper right-hand single door (after you've unlocked it) then enter the first door in the corridor. Later you can combine the White Statue with the Angel Wings to make the Statue of Good and place it along with the Black Angel on the statue in the main hall to open a door.

● FIRE KEY
Starts as a Facility Key until you examine it. This is under the cage in the sunken area of the room containing cages, where you fight a centipede boss. Use Billy to turn the second lever above while Rebecca waits below to grab the key. Use it on the red doors in the dining room (lower left-hand door in main hall) and in the corridor after the Conference room.

Examining items in your inventory often gives you a clue about what they should do

● IRON NEEDLE
In the room after using the Fire Key (corridor after Conference room). Have Billy push the table to the fireplace then switch on the light and get the needle from the Moose head (stand on the table). Use it on the clock in the room above the study and make the time 8:15 to unlock two doors.

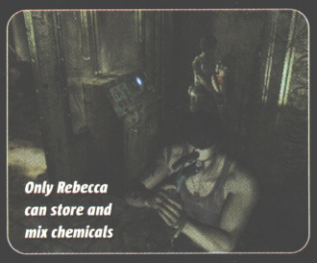
● MICROFILM B
In the cozy room through the single door in the main hall you unlocked with the clock. Use it with Microfilm A.

● MO DISK
In the projector room after using both Microfilms on the projector. Use it on the podium in the Conference room to get a code then use the image from the projector to work out which two desk buttons to press (at the same time). This opens up the sword doors.

● LIGHTER FLUID
Through the Fire Key door in the dining room. Combine it with Billy's Lighter and use to light the candle in the study to open a door and to light the animal statues later.

● ANGEL WINGS
Use the lighter in the study to enter the library. Use Billy to push the bookcase to get the Book of Good. Open it to get the Angle Wings.

3 LABORATORY


Only Rebecca can store and mix chemicals

● LEECH CAPSULE
After using the Hookshot for a second time in the Chapel area you will fight a leech zombie in a lab. Press the button behind it to get the Leech Capsule. You have to combine this with the green and red chemicals (these are found in large cylinders in the rooms above the service lift) in order to make the Bl. Leech Charm.

● BL. LEECH CHARM
Made from combining green and red chemicals with the Leech Capsule. Send it down the service lift and get whoever's down there to insert it into the blue statue door inside the secret room (press a switch upstairs). This unlocks a new room for you.

● INPUT REG. COIL
This is in the room unlocked by the Bl. Leech Charm. You need it along with the Output Reg. Coil to get the cable car working.

● GR. LEECH CHARM
Tucked into the statue in the second room after using the Bl. Leech charm. Send it upstairs as it unlocks the second statue door.

● STERILISING AGENT
In the morgue after opening the green statue door with the Gr. Leech Charm. Use it to neutralise the gas in the lab, which allows access to the Breeding Room Key.

● BREEDING ROOM KEY
In the gas-filled compartment. Use the Sterilising Agent to get it. The key unlocks the Breeding Room just a few doors away.

Keep the Hookshot somewhere handy, as you'll need it a few more times

● DIAL
In a cage inside the Breeding Room. Send it downstairs to unlock the door near the blue statue door. The door combination is 4863.

● OUTPUT REG. COIL
This is in the cable-car room. You'll need it along with the Input Reg. Coil in order to get the cable car working.

4 FACTORY

● U KEY
Ride the tiny elevator down in the room just before a save room. Follow the route to the end to get the Factory Key. Examine it to turn it into the U Key. Use it in the save room above.

● ELEVATOR KEY
On the floor after you ride down on the huge elevator. Use it on the elevator near the pile of rubble on the other side of the big elevator.

5 TREATMENT PLANT

● HANDLE
Near to where you rescue Billy is a pit full of crates. Arrange them so that the three wooden ones are against the end wall and fill up the pit with water to make a floating bridge. On the other side is the Handle. Use it to open the door in the corridor before the pool table room.

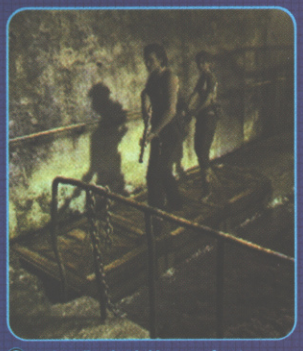
● MOTHERBOARD
This is in the room above where you fight Tyrant for the second time (press a switch to release a ladder). Use the lift in the room below to return to the room with steaming pipes and insert the Motherboard into the open circuit. This restores power to the Gondola.

● INDUSTRIAL WATER
After Rebecca rides the Gondola to the control room and turns the lever, go through to the next room to get the water. Mix it with Sulphuric Acid (a mixture of blue and red chemicals) to make Battery Fluid.

● HI-POWER BATTERY
This is made by combing Battery Fluid (mix Industrial Water with red and blue chemicals) with the Empty Battery. The Empty Battery is found in the room below the blue chemical room. You will need Billy to give Rebecca a boast to reach it. The Hi-Power Battery is used for powering the forklift truck.

● KEYCARD
After using the Hi-Power Battery on the forklift truck have Rebecca climb on the crate then raise it to grab the Keycard. This opens the door leading to the final boss fights.

● SHAFT KEYS
After beating the Dr Marcus monster these will be on the floor. Use them in the same room.


Make a floating bridge out of crates

Combine this with the White Statue to make the Statue of Good.

● BLACK STATUE
Go through the single wooden door in the dining room to get the statue. Combine it with Black Wings to make the Statue of Evil. Put this and the Statue of Good on the statue in the main hall to open a door.

● BLACK WING
In the desk of the chess room (first door after the sword doors in the Conference room). Move the white king piece so that it is on the black square above the castle it starts next to. This reveals the Book of Evil. Inside are the wings. Combine them with the Black Statue to make the Statue of Evil.

● UNITY TABLET
After solving the animal statue puzzle (light the statues in this order: deer, wolf, horse, tiger, snake, eagle) in the room after the boiler room, you will find the tablet in the bedroom fireplace of the next room. Use it with the other tablets on the telescope to open the way to the lab.

● LOCKER KEY
Go through the door in the animal statue room and then through the next door. Two insects guard the key. Use it to open a locker in the weapons room to get the Duralumin Case.

● DURALUMIN CASE
In the locker in the weapons room after the animal statue room. Examine it to find the code to unlock it and get the Handgun Parts.

● WATER KEY
Use Rebecca in the weapons room to press the switches on the control panel so that Billy can reach a red switch. Kill the creatures that attack then get the Facility Key from the hole and examine it to turn it into the Water Key. Use it on the blue door in the room where you got the grenade launcher and White Statue.

● VICE HANDLE
In the first room after going through the door using the Water Key. Take it a few doors down to a smashed-up room and use it on the Vice with the missing handle to get hold of the Obedience Tablet.

● OBEDIENCE TABLET
Go through the Water Key door and through the last door in the corridor then enter the room on the right. Use the Vice Handle on the Vice to get the tablet. Use the tablet with the other two on the telescope to reach the next area.

● BATTERY
Get Billy to play the piano in the bar (this is the second room after the Water Key door). Have Rebecca go through the gap and get the Battery. Get Billy to play the piano again to re-open the door. Use the Battery to power the lift (go through the knight doors in the main hall) then push the crate to the pillar and use Billy to get hold of the Discipline Tablet.

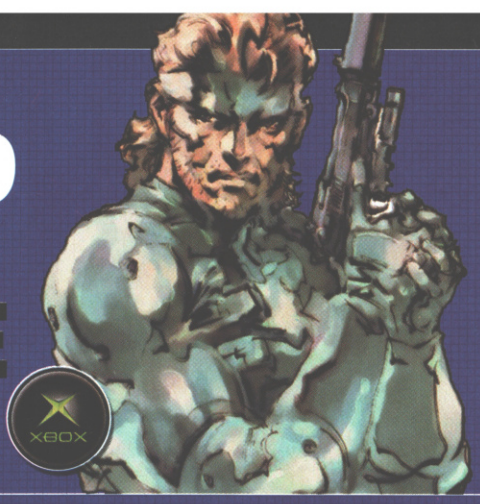
● DISCIPLINE TABLET
This can be found places on top of the pillar outside the main entrance of the training facility. You need to use it along with the other two on the telescope to open the next chapter on disc 2.

Some items need to be combined before they are useful

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE

PLAYING AS SNAKE

Forget about girly Raiden; choose Snake's Tales and play as the man himself. Barny Zoeller shows you how

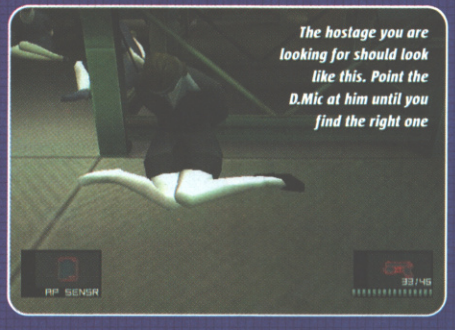


1 A WRONG-DOING

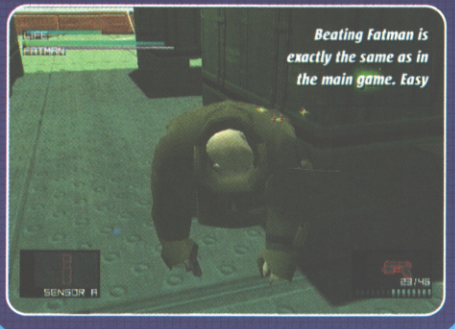
● **Go down the stairs on the left.** Take out the two guards then avoid the Cyphers on the bridge to reach the upper part of the Strut F Warehouse. Use the vent in the second room on the right to get past the guard patrolling the middle hall. Run to the other side of the upper area and enter the right door to meet Ames.

● **Now head to EF Connecting Bridge.** Take out the Cyphers then go to Shell 1 Core. Make sure you pick up the Directional Microphone from the locker room before heading to B1. Enter the hall and save. Move around the hostage room in a box. Use the D. Mic to scan each of the younger looking females until you find Jennifer. After the text you'll be outside the hostage room. Use the elevator to reach B2 and use the Coolant on the bomb that is underneath the middle set of computers.

● **Afterwards make your way to Strut E and get onto the top, ready to start fighting Fatman.** Fatman will skate around, planting bombs. You need to find these and spray them with Coolant to disarm them. While doing this you also need to be damaging Fatman. Shoot him when he pauses, to knock him over. Now run over and stand face to face with him. When he begins getting up shoot him in the forehead. Repeat this process until he dies. If you fought Fatman before rescuing the hostages, the ending you get will be different. In addition, you will start with an M9 when you try it all over again.



The hostage you are looking for should look like this. Point the D.Mic at him until you find the right one



Beating Fatman is exactly the same as in the main game. Easy

You don't get the radar so keep the AP sensor equipped at all times

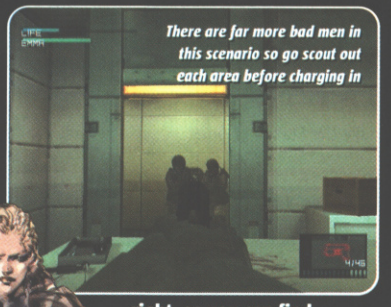
2 BIG SHELL EVIL

● **Go through the Parcel room to DE connecting bridge.** Eliminate the guards in Strut D, making sure you grab the M9 from behind the stairs connecting the top walkway to the one below. Go through the upper left door to CD connecting bridge. Once in Strut C you can find ammo in both bathrooms. Afterwards you can find Emma in the cupboard in the kitchen. Then the next guards will enter by the nearest door.

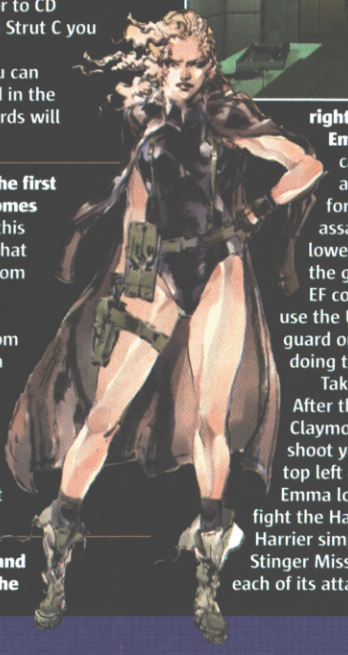
● **Go into FPV and shoot the first guard in the head as he comes through the door.** Stay at this level and shoot any more that appear from this door or from the right. Go to Strut B Transformer Room and get some ammo and health from the lockers. Enter the room and activate the node on the lower level. Now head all the way back to Strut F via BC connecting bridge. Alerting any guards in Strut F will result in instant failure so be extra careful.

● **Cross the balcony part and look in the first room on the right, so you can find Emma.** Afterwards you can start searching all the different rooms for items (the M4 assault rifle is in the large lower room) and clear out the guards. Drag Emma to EF connecting bridge and use the USP to shoot the guard on the heliport before doing the Cyphers.

Take Emma to Strut E. After the text, plant some Claymores to the south then shoot your way over to the top left door. Once outside Emma locks the door then you fight the Harrier. Defeat the Harrier simply by shooting Stinger Missiles at it in between each of its attacks.



There are far more bad men in this scenario so go scout out each area before charging in



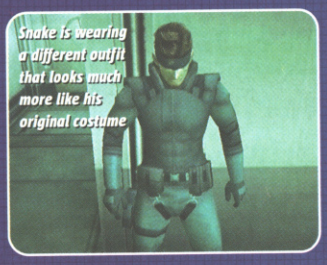
3 CONFIDENTIAL LEGACY

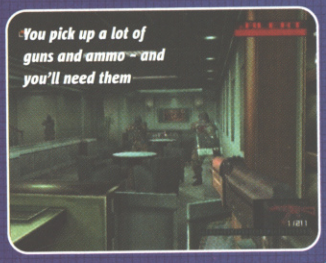
● **Explore the top balcony for some items then enter the ship via the lower left door.** Dispose of the guards and check the locker room for items and posters. Afterwards go through the left-hand door to the Crew's Lounge area. There are two guards on the steps but they will only notice you if you walk directly in front of them so go through the lounge and take out the patrolling guard first. Then attack and snap the necks of the other two from behind.

● **Get the AKS-74U from behind the bar.** Go through the top right-hand door and kill the guards. You can get the M4 from the stairs on the right. Make your way up to Deck C. Collect the Thermal Goggles from the end of the hall after disposing of the guard and three cameras then head up to Deck D and from there up to the bridge.

● **After the text go all the way back down to the Crew's Lounge.** Go through the right-hand door, down the steps and into the Engine Room. On your way through this room be sure to get the PSG-1 which is near to where the second guard patrols. Use the sniper rifle to kill all the guards then enter the room on the far side. You have to shoot three sensor boxes in order to disable the explosives in the corridor. Shoot the first one on top of the electrical boxes to the right of the corridor. Now walk past the first sensor that is now deactivated. The second one is on the right-hand wall in the corridor and the third is on the left-hand wall at the end.

● **Pick up the USP Suppressor in the following corridor.** You'll have to fight a group of soldiers in the next corridor so equip rations and the USP. Make sure you have at least one ration left afterwards. After you've seen the text you have to fight your way back to the bridge. Use the M4 or AK47 and start working your way slowly through the corridors. Then go to the bridge, where you fight Meryl. Here, simply kneel behind the light brown crate and whenever Meryl is not firing stand up and shoot her. If you use an M9 to defeat her, you will get a different ending.


Snake is wearing a different outfit that looks much more like his original costume

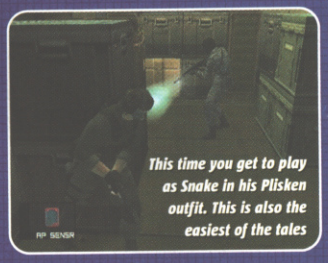

You pick up a lot of guns and ammo – and you'll need them

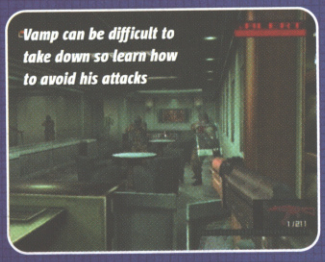
4 DEAD MAN WHISPERS

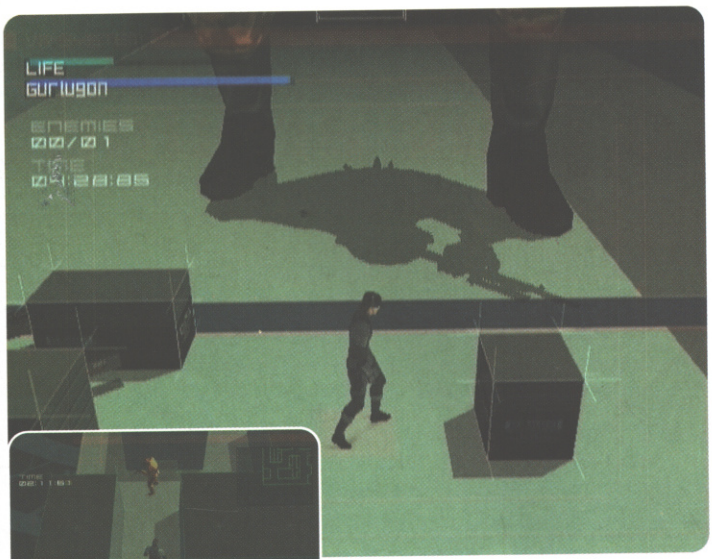
● **Head to Strut A, kill the guards and grab some bandages from the lockers.** Next cross AB connecting bridge to Strut B for some text. Make sure you pick up the ammo and ration in this area before going to Strut C. Collect items from both bathrooms then kill the guard in the dinning room and find the M9 under the second table. Now go to Strut D for more text. On your way through Strut D you should pick up the ration in the middle and the M4 ammo near the exit door on the opposite side to where you came in.

● **Cross DE bridge.** On your way, you can get another ration and some grenades in the lower far corner. In the parcel room kill some guards. Go downstairs and then through the door on the right and get the ration before heading through the next door. After the text you will be in Strut L. Kill the guards and Cyphers then target the man on the roof of Shell 2 Core before going in. Collect all the ammo and Nikita inside then stand on the crate near the stairs and fire the Nikita at the higher vent. Guide it through a series of turns into a room.

● **From there, turn it right into another vent.** This leads to another room where you should steer it into a panel at the end. Now go through the door that was guarded by the electrical floor. Head to the elevator after which you will face Vamp. First shoot out the four lights in this room then stand in the corner near the door and use first-person view to shoot Vamp whenever he jumps out of the water. When he is glowing he cannot be damaged and if he walks on your catwalk, just run around to avoid his powerful knife attack. If you use the M9 to defeat him, you will get a different ending than if you used a more lethal weapon.


This time you get to play as Snake in his Plisken outfit. This is also the easiest of the tales


Vamp can be difficult to take down so learn how to avoid his attacks



There are two ways to kill this thing: the hard way or the very easy way. Use missiles if you like it difficult

You have to finish many annoying VR missions to complete this tale but luckily you can skip some if you want

5 EXTERNAL GAZER

● **This is all very weird.** Start crossing the bridge. You will be transported to the VR-type mission. This is optional so quit if you cannot be bothered. It's followed by another optional VR mission. Afterwards go to Strut C. Check under the table for a ration and in the bathrooms for ammo.

● **Now go to AB bridge and take a snap of the thing in the water.** You will need to take a zoomed-in picture of the creature's head and torso for it to count. As soon as you've done that you will be assaulted by a lot of terrorists. Lob a stun grenade at one side and then run pass the guards it knocks out. Use a doorway and then cap any approaching bad guys in the head to send them to sleep. Look out for one or two behind you. After putting down enough Olga will appear. Now you need to fight a giant soldier.

● **Stand by the tall crate in the middle.** After the creature blasts it away you will see a book. Take this and put it in front of him. Stand by it until he freezes you. After this he will look at the book and the fight will end. The next few VR missions must be finished to progress (sprint right and all the way round to the goal without stopping).

● **After this you will have to beat a tough target VR.** Concentrate on shooting the orange ones quickly. These are followed by a few more VRs at the end of which you have to fight Metal Gear Ray followed by Solidus. Do these in the same way as in the game, only you must remember that the difficulty is set to hard.

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computer and video games

Ringtones + Logos

IN ASSOCIATION WITH FUTURE MOBILE

Chart Hits

17435	Avril Lavigne, Sk8ter Boi
20085	Big Bruvaz, O K
17685	Busted, Year 3000
17288	Cheeky Girls, The Cheeky Song
16864	Christina Aguilera, Dirrty
19711	Craig David, Hidden Agenda
17480	D J Otzi, Life Is Life
17298	Darius, Rushes
17702	David Sneddon, Stop Living The Lie
15607	DJ Sammy, Heaven
17629	Electric Six, High Voltage
17485	Eminem, Lose Yourself
14842	Eve, Gangsta Lovin'
17716	Feeder, Just The Way I'm Feeling
17498	Girls Aloud, Sound Of The Under...
17736	Jaimeson, True
17052	Jennifer Lopez, Jenny From The Block
19761	Jurgen Vries, The Opera Song
20162	Justin Timberlake, Cry Me A River
20053	Kelly Osbourne, Shut Up
19871	Kelly Rowland, Stole
17536	Miss Dynamite, Put Him Out
20197	Oasis, Songbird
17545	One True Voice, Sacred Trust
17549	Pink, Family Portrait
15419	Sam Mumba, I'm Right Here
20227	Sean Paul, Gimme The Light
17393	Sum 41, Still Waiting
19942	T A T U, All The Things She Said
17840	Zoe Birkett, Treat Me Like A Lady

TV and Film

12765	20th Century Fox, Intro
13083	Addams Family, Theme
12770	Airwolf, Theme
12767	A-Team, Theme
12773	Austin Powers, Theme
12777	Back to the Future, Theme
12778	Batman, 60's Theme
12779	Battlestar Galactica, Theme
12783	Benny Hill, Theme
12775	Beverly Hills Cop, Theme - Axel F
12966	Big Brother, Theme
12967	Blackadder, Theme
12791	Bod, Theme
12795	Buck Rogers, Theme
12796	Buffy, Theme
12801	Charlies Angels, Theme
12968	Choulton & The Wheelies, Theme
12809	Coca Cola, Theme
12811	Countdown, Theme
12816	Dangermouse, Theme
12819	Dawson's Creek, Theme
12830	Dukes Of Hazzard, Theme
12840	Exorcist, Theme
12847	Fleetwood Mac, Formula 1 Theme
12855	Flintstones, Theme
12850	Flipper, Theme
12969	Friends, I'll Be There For You
12867	Grease, Theme
12869	Gremlins, Theme
12871	Halloween, Theme
12873	Happy Days, Theme
12877	Hawaii Five-0, Theme
12893	I Dream Of Jeannie, Theme
12898	Indiana Jones, Theme
12899	Inspector Gadget, Theme
12792	James Bond, Theme
12915	Knight Rider, Theme
12935	Lone Ranger, Theme
12936	Looney Toons, Theme
12861	Mary Poppins, Goatherd
12972	Men Behaving Badly, Theme
12945	Mission Impossible, Theme
12930	Monty Python, Bright Side of Life
12973	Mr Men, Theme
12947	Muppet Show, Theme
12974	Only Fools, Closing Credits
12951	Pink Panther, Theme
12976	Red Dwarf, Theme
12911	Rhubarb and Custard, Theme
12955	Scooby Doo, Theme
12956	Simpsons, Theme
12835	Star Trek, Enterprise
12957	Star Trek, Original Theme
12822	Star Wars, Luke's Theme
12563	The Italian Job, Self Preservation Soc.
12963	Thunderbirds, Theme
12964	Toy Story, Friend In Me
12979	Wallace and Gromit, Theme
12944	Wombles, Theme
13287	X-Men, Theme

Game Headz (Retro)

13198	Afterburner, Theme
13158	Airwolf, Theme
13199	Altered Beast, Game Theme
13162	Bomb Jack, Theme
13201	Bomberman, Theme
13205	Bubble Bobble, Theme
13208	Castlevania IV, Level 1
13210	Castlevania, Level 1
13211	Circus Charlie, Theme
13217	Elevator Action, Main Theme
13195	Flip Out, Theme
13220	Ghouls And Ghosts, Level 1
13221	Golden Axe, Level 1
13222	Gradius, Level 1
13223	Gunsmoke, Stage One
13284	Mario Bros., Level 1
13227	Mario Bros., Underground
13271	Mario World, Map
12995	Monty on the Run, Theme
13987	Pac Man, Theme
13008	Pac-Mania, Theme
13236	Rainbow Islands, Theme
13121	Rick Dangerous, Theme
13278	Sonic, Hill Zone
13279	Sonic, Marble Zone
13260	Street Fighter II, Cammy's Stage
13261	Street Fighter II, Chun Li's Stage
13253	Street Fighter II, Ryu's Stage
13228	Tetris, Theme
13288	Zelda 2, Intro

Dance Anthems

14218	Afrika Bambata, Planet Rock
12459	BT, Flaming June
12677	Chemical Brothers, Block Rockin' Beats
12450	Cosmic Gate, Fire Wire
12452	DJ Jean, The Launch
12461	DJ Quicksilver, Belissima
15607	DJ Sammy, Heaven
12457	Energy 52, Café Del Mar
12680	Faithless, Insomnia
14233	Jurgen Vries, The Theme
14234	Lasgo, Alone
14236	MARRS, Pump The Volume
14238	Oakenfold, Starry Eyed
12466	PPK, Resurrection
14244	Prodigy, No Good
14248	Roger Sanchez, Another Chance
14252	Sasha, Xpander
17382	Scooter, Posse
14256	Stardust, Music Sounds Better
14257	Supermen Lovers, Starlight

Old Skool

14218	Afrika Bambata, Planet Rock
14222	C.Jackson, Get Wicked
14160	D-Lite, Groove Is In Heart
14161	Fresh Prince, Summertime
12920	Kraftwerk, The Model
14236	MARRS, Pump The Volume
12748	New Order, Blue Monday
14162	Prodigy, Charly
14246	Robert Miles, Children
14250	S-Express, Theme

Exclusive

12791	Bod, Theme
12847	Fleetwood Mac, Formula 1 Theme
13188	He-Man, Theme
12575	Jacksons, Blm It On Boogie
18758	Mario Sunshine, Delfino Plaza
12945	Mission Impossible, Theme
13985	Out Run, Magical Shower
12900	Simpsons, Itchy & Scratchy Show
12817	Star Wars, Imperial March
13254	Street Fighter II, Title

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REVIEWS

THIS MONTH

The post-Christmas months for game releases are normally a bit Sam Dingle – you know, slow and quiet. Not so this year – there's practically a whole delicious Celebrations-box full of high profile games to tickle your gaming taste buds.

There's real variety too. From half-naked girls to mad scientists via impossibly cool demon-hunters and big burly men wearing lycra panties, we've never seen a March like it. Lucky, then, that you've got the UK's most trustworthy reviews to help you pick what you fancy, a bit like you'd use that little glossy menu you get in a box of chocs. Now, where did I put that mini Mars Bar...

Zee

PS2 Devil May Cry 2 76
XB PS2 PC Indiana Jones And The Emperor's Tomb 80
PC Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield 82
PS2 Pride FC Fighting Championships 84
PS2 Galerians: Ash 85
PS2 Tenchu 3: Wrath Of Heaven 86
PC Vietcong 87
GC Phantasy Star Online: Episode I & II 88
GBA Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo 88
XB Crimson Sea 89
XB Dead Or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball 90
PS2 Guilty Gear X2 92
GBA Zelda: A Link To the Past 93
XB Kung Fu Chaos 94
XB PS2 GBA Dr. Muto 94
XB Steel Battalion 96
XB PS2 GC Vexx 97
PS2 The Mark Of Kri 98
PC Unreal II: The Awakening 100
XB Panzer Dragoon Orta ..101
GBA Kirby Nightmare In Dreamland 102
XB House Of The Dead III 103
XB PC PS2 Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis 103
GC Metroid Prime 104

CVG SCORES

A great game is a great game, right? Yet some of you would be as pleased as a pooch with two choppers to spend weeks collecting dog tags in MGS2, but would rather eat poodle eggs than spend one minute on Final Fantasy X, and vice versa. That doesn't make one better than the other; they're just different genres for different tastes. It's why so many of us love games.

Which is where CVG comes in. We play the rubbish games so you don't have to. We review only the biggest, best or most significant releases of the month. And our scores are based on one key measure: fun. It's that simple.

Alex Simmons
Editor

WHAT THE SCORES MEAN

1	Why, God, why?
2	Stinks. Never play this
3	A waste of your money
4	Maybe rent, never buy
5	Very average
6	Fairly solid but nowt special
7	Tasty
8	Quality game. Consider buying it
9	Class on a disc
10	An absolute must that defines the genre

CVG AWARDS

These accolades don't get dished out just because a game gets a certain score. They're CVG's way of telling you which are our pet hates and personal favourites.

CVG ESSENTIAL
The most coveted award a game can get. Worth buying the console to play the game

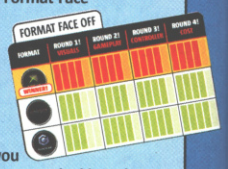
CVG RECOMMENDED
A damn good game. It may not break the mould, but it's a cut above the rest

CVG GAME OF THE MONTH
Doesn't have to be the highest scorer, but it's CVG's pick of the bunch this month

CVG STINKER
More abominable than a Yeti

MULTI-FORMAT REVIEWS

Own more than one console and want to know what version of a game is best? Well, CVG's new Format Face-Off box scores each platform according to Visuals, Gameplay, Controller and Cost, with an average giving you a Winner or a Draw, marked in red.



Since games don't always release at the same time, you only get the Format Face-Off when we've rated two or more versions. And where formats are radically different we'll do separate reviews.

CVG TOP FIVES

Welcome to CVG's mini bible of the greatest games for the latest systems. Read and learn!

We've seen a lot of quality games in the quarter of a century since the debut of Space Invaders. Videogames' Hall of Fame is packed with undisputed classics of their time and format. But with gaming technology and players' expectations ever changing, what are today's best games? That's exactly what the lists below are there to tell you.

IF YOU CAN'T FIND ANY NEW RELEASES THAT PICKLE YOUR GHERKIN IN THIS MONTH'S REVIEWS SECTION, THEN CHECK THE GAMES BELOW – THEY'RE THE VERY BEST GAMES AROUND RIGHT NOW FOR THE FORMATS IN QUESTION.

AND IF YOU CAN'T DECIDE WHAT NEW GAMES SYSTEM TO BUY, AGAIN, CHECK THE GAMES BELOW – IF THERE AREN'T ANY ON ONE PARTICULAR FORMAT THAT YOU WANT TO PLAY, THEN SIMPLY CHOOSE ANOTHER FORMAT.

EACH ISSUE WE'LL UPDATE OUR LISTS TO INCLUDE ANY NEW RELEASES WORTH INCLUDING, AND NO DOUBT EVERY MONTH SOME OF YOU WILL BE SUFFICIENTLY OUTRAGED BY OUR CHOICES TO WRITE IN AND COMPLAIN...

KEY

PS2 | XBOX | GBA | GC | PC | PS | DC | OTHER FORMAT | D DEVELOPER | P PUBLISHER | £ PRICE | I CVG ISSUE NO. | NP NO. PLAYERS | > NEW ENTRY | B BUDGET GAME

PLAYSTATION 2

GTA VICE CITY
D ROCKSTAR P TAKE 2 £ 39.99 I 254 NP 1
Another violent, utterly amoral criminal masterpiece, following in the best tradition of videogames

METAL GEAR SOLID 2
D KONAMI P KONAMI £ 39.99 I 244 NP 1
Cinematic stealth action elevated to an art form, just cut a tad too short, though

TONY HAWK'S PS4
D NEVERSOFT P ACTIVISION £ 39.99 I 254 NP 1-4 (ONLINE)
More exciting and satisfying but not as ground-breaking as earlier incarnations. But still the best extreme sports game out there on any format

PES 2
D KONAMI P KONAMI £ 39.99 I 253 NP 8
The most accurate footie game around while remaining fun. Like its predecessor, PES2 rewards the time you invest

TIMESPLITTERS 2
D FREE RADICAL P EIDOS £ 44.99 I 252 NP 16
PS2's finest first-person shooter yet. Fast, furious and fantastic-looking; answers critics of the original with a double-barrel in the face

XBOX

SPLINTER CELL
D UBI SOFT P UBI SOFT £ 44.99 I 254 NP 1
Tense, realistic and the best stealth game to date. Move over Snake, Sam's the man

BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER
D ARTOON P MICROSOFT £ 39.99 I 253 NP 1
A highly original platformer from Sonic's co-creator exploring Xbox's true potential. Not perfect, but lots of fun

DEAD OR ALIVE 3
D TEAM NINJA P MICROSOFT £ 44.99 I 243 NP 4
Fantastic-looking fighter, a bit gimmicky, but solid stuff for all standards of player all the same

HALO
D BUNGIE P MICROSOFT £ 44.99 I 242 NP 16
Luscious looks, clever enemies and a neat storyline. Best console first-person shooter yet

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4
D NEVERSOFT P ACTIVISION £ 39.99 I 254 NP 8 (OFFLINE ONLY)
Much like the PS2 version, only with a slightly cack controller making tricking tougher, and NO online play. Still, they doubled the offline multiplayer count...

GAME BOY ADVANCE

GOLDEN SUN
D CAMELOT/NINTENDO P NINTENDO £ 29.99 I 244 NP 2
Polished role-player by any standards, all the more impressive on handheld. Incredible

ADVANCE WARS
D NINTENDO/INTELLIGENRE P NINTENDO £ 29.99 I 240 NP 4
Stunning turn-based strategy game rammed with hidden bonuses. Still a CVG obsession

MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT
D NINTENDO P NINTENDO £ 29.99 I 239 NP 4
Racer recapturing the brilliance of earlier outings, though with a few controversial tweaks here and there

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
D NINTENDO P NINTENDO £ 29.99 I 244 NP 4
More classic Mario magic given the GBA makeover, this time of the platform persuasion

SUPER GHOULS 'N GHOSTS
D CAPCOM P CAPCOM £ 34.99 I 251 NP 1
A stiffer challenge than Mario's playful platform scroller. Looks great too. Retro appeal is optional

GAMECUBE

SUPER MONKEY BALL
D AV/SEGA P INFOGRAMES £ 39.99 I 246 NP 4
Cute, hardcore, vertigo-inducing thumb-teaser with loads of modes and plenty of replayability

RESIDENT EVIL
D CAPCOM P CAPCOM £ 39.99 I 250 NP 1
The original Resident Evil adventure is stunningly updated. Your eyes won't believe the difference

PIKMIN
D NINTENDO P NINTENDO £ 39.99 I 248 NP 1
Imaginative action strategy played against the clock, with touches of Miyamoto genius

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
D NINTENDO P NINTENDO £ 39.99 I 251/2 NP 1
The best platform adventure in the history of gaming bar none, AND it lasts for ages

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
D HAL LABORATORY P NINTENDO £ 39.99 I 247 NP 4
Painfully fast fighter or homage to all things Nintendo? Both, though a bit niche

PC

MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT
D 2015 P EA £ 29.99 I 243 NP 32
Class scripting, enemy AI and the WWII setting make for a tense if plot-light FPS

CIVILIZATION III
D FIRAXIS P INFOGRAMES £ 29.99 NP 1
Videogaming crack. Complex, formulaic but so immersive it can mess with your emotions

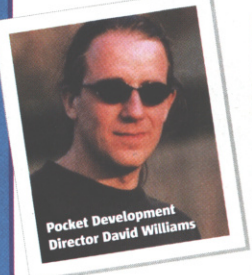
OPERATION FLASHPOINT
D BOHEMIA P CODEMASTERS £ 29.99 (GOLD EDITION) I 236 NP 16
Bit cack-looking but quality war sim that'd convert a hippy to the art of soldiering

NOLF 2
D MONOLITH P VU GAMES £ 34.99 I 254 NP 4
In a situation reversal worthy of any spy movie, Cate Archer's second adventure is everything the rubbish original wasn't. A funny, inventive and great-looking stealth FPS, it proves PC one-player gaming is very much alive

HALF-LIFE
D VALVE P VIVENDI I 206 £ 9.99 B NP 16
Dated but still a byword for classy, story-driven shooters, better than many new releases – even today

PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION

This month: David Williams of Hulk developer Pocket Studios presents his top five games of the moment

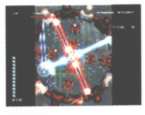


Pocket Development Director David Williams

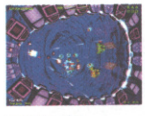
BURNOUT 2
PS2
D Criterion Games
"The most stupidly fast and furious racing game ever. The speed is so intense that your eyes are glued to the screen until the inevitable crash forces your body forward as if flying through a windscreen"

QUAKE III
PC
D id Software
"The office favourite and still the best first-person shooter. Unreal, 1942 and others have come and gone, but we're still jumping into the frantic madness of Quake most lunchtimes"

GALAGA '88
MAME
D Namco
"Quite simply one of my favourite arcade games of all times. Takes the well-known gameplay system of Galaxians and Galaga and adds a little extra style. I just love the damn thing"



IKARUGA
DC
D Treasure
"Makes the Dreamcast feel like the machine Sega always meant it to be. The graphics put the other next-gen systems to shame, and the gameplay is frantic"



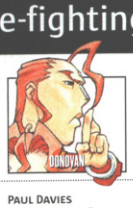
MUTANT STORM
PC
D PomPom Games
"I tend to like old-style shooters. PomPom has a knack of taking an old style gameplay mechanic and modernising it without ruining the thing"

BEST IMPORT

WORLD SOCCER WINNING ELEVEN 6 FINAL EVOLUTION
D KONAMI
P KONAMI
£ 70 (JAP IMPORT) UK RELEASE: NEVER NP: 8
A better looking update with improved animations, tweaked dribbling and more physical fighting over possession, plus latest player and team stats.

CVG THE TEAM

Meet this month's super-puzzle-fighting team

FAVE SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II TURBO CHARACTER?								
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WHICH CONSOLE TITLE ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING ONLINE?	*"Whenever Pro Evo goes online I'll be there all day and night, perfecting my already impressive PES skills so I can humiliate Paul, Mike and Jaime more than I already do"*	*"Star Wars Galaxies (any format). When it comes to multiplayer Wars games, I have no shame, to the extent of happily being seen in public talking about MMORPGs"*	*"Zelda Four Swords. If they can do it on GBA they can do it on GC – imagine full 3D dungeons that you quest through with pals – and four full 3D Links each with a different outfit"*	*"Halo 2. Xbox Live is blinding and knowing Bungie, the online multiplayer modes will be utterly mental, imaginative and addictive"*	*"Whenever Pro Evo goes online I'll be there all day, all night, every weekend, honing my meagre skills so I can humiliate Alex, Mike and Jaime in the office"*	*"I want an online version of Tri-force F-Zero. It could be playable through your GameCube and the arcade cabinet. With 32 cars on the track it would kick ass. I want it now!"*	*"Phantasy Star Online for my GameCube. I've seen how obsessed Paul Davies became with the Dreamcast version so it must be good."*	*"Alex, Mike and Paul are twisting my arm to join their PSO team but I'd rather be shopping in the main hub than questing with those dolts"*

DEVIL MAY CRY 2

The **coolest cat** in videogames is **back on the PS2**

There's no juddering between the moves, making the action seamless and downright sexy

The plot is vague and virtually incomprehensible. Even when you've completed the game you still won't know what happened

Activate Lucia's devil trigger and she'll transform into a powerful angel spirit

Few gaming heroes could be described as cool. Mario may have starred in the most innovative platform games ever conceived, but his porn star moustache hasn't been hip since 1976. And while Sonic was one of the '80s' most popular stars, these days he looks more like an extra from The Tweenies.

But when Dante – the twin-pistolled, silver-haired, kick-ass demon slayer from Devil May Cry – made his debut on the PS2, a hero was born who was so stylish, so slick, so goddamn cool that he made his contemporaries seem as relevant as shell suits and Rubik's cubes. Now he's back, ready to tear the devil himself a new arse.

SHOUT AT THE DEVIL

Devil May Cry 2 is set several years after the original game – in which Dante defeated the demonic horde and saved the world. This time Arius, the president of a multinational corporation, has harnessed the power of the underworld and is using it to dominate the land of Vie de Marli and build shadowy cities ruled by the evil denizens of Hades.

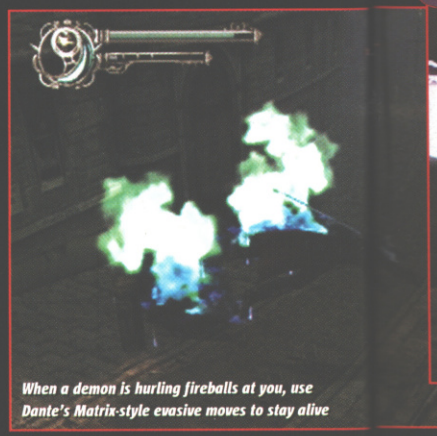
This time Dante isn't alone in his quest. Instead, Devil May Cry 2 comes on two separate discs, one dedicated to the silver-haired avenger and the other to Lucia, a ruthless demon hunter who uses throwing knives where Dante brandishes twin pistols, and her fists instead of a sword.

Although each of the characters takes different paths through the adventure, their stories are inextricably linked and their plots cross paths at various points. Only by working through both adventures will you be able to fathom the relationship between Dante and Lucia and

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **1**
COST: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
OUT: **MARCH 28**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**
URL: **WWW.CAPCOM.CO.JP/DEVIL2/**

Jumping through a burning building... chased by a zombie helicopter... in the dark... aargh!



When a demon is hurling fireballs at you, use Dante's Matrix-style evasive moves to stay alive

COOL AS ICE

Although DMC2 is fundamentally flawed, Dante and Lucia are still flexible and exciting characters. By linking together their basic moves you can create awesome action sequences that'll make you look like a gaming god.

1 As he explores the city streets, Dante is suddenly surrounded by a group of demons

2 Guns blazing, Dante avoids his aggressors by running up the side of a wall, Matrix-style

3 To get above the demons and unleash the bullets, he jumps off the side of the building

When he shoots, the blast gives him extra height, giving him extra airborne seconds

4 As gravity takes over, Dante unsheathes his sword and plunges into the demons

5 If Dante double jumps, he can plummet towards the ground headfirst. Cool as...

6 There are many evasive moves, including back flips, cartwheels and dives

7 If all else fails, Dante can double-jump to nearby rooftops and fire downwards

8

There are weapons to collect, including a shotgun, dual machine pistols and a rocket launcher

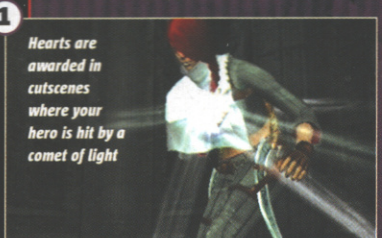
Even these tanks have been possessed by evil spirits. Time to scarper, me thinks?

Although they use different weapons, Dante and Lucia are virtually the same

WHAT THE DEVIL?

As in the first game, Dante can transform himself into a demon to tackle difficult enemies. But there's more strategy involved this time. Both characters have an amulet into which hearts can be inserted, each one giving your hero a new demonic power. Then it's up to you to choose which magical skill to use in dangerous situations.

1 Hearts are awarded in cutscenes where your hero is hit by a comet of light



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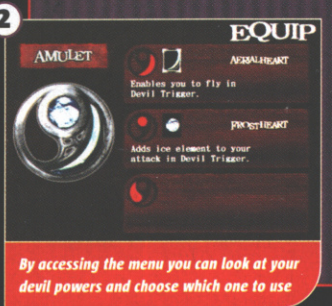


By accessing the menu you can look at your devil powers and choose which one to use

3

The aerial heart is one of the first you'll find, allowing your hero to take to the skies

Many of the bosses have weak spots. Stand below Nefasturris and you'll be able to attack the monster without him touching you

appreciate the scale of their combined battle against the forces of evil.

COOL AS FUNK

Although Dante had a dazzling variety of moves in the first game, his attacks and acrobatics have been beefed up for the sequel. With his blood-red trench coat flapping behind him, Dante can now run up the sides of walls, somersault over his enemies and back-flip to avoid projectiles, all

the time staying locked on his adversaries as his twin pistols blaze like the fires of hell.

Using the simple controls, Dante's antics can be linked together into seamless action sequences that are the closest yet to capturing the pant-wetting excitement of The Matrix. If it's thrills you're after, DMC2's got them in spades.

The environments have also been enhanced to make use of Dante's new moves. Whereas the original game featured claustrophobic corridors and ornate interiors, the new adventure is set in the streets of moody, gothic cities where Dante and his enemies are dwarfed by towering skyscrapers.

Using his double jump, Dante can hurl himself onto flat rooftops to fire on the enemies below, or to get a better angle for blasting airborne nasties. When surrounded by devils, fleeing to the rooftops is sometimes Dante's only hope of survival.

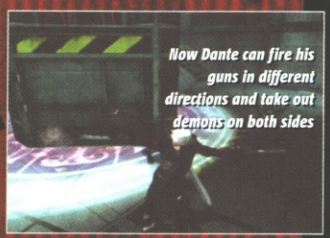
As a sequel to one of PS2's most thrilling adventures, DMC2 is a bit pants

Lucia's a stylish lady. Whether slaying hellspawn or posing beneath the flattering blue shimmer of spooky caverns, she's always nicely turned out

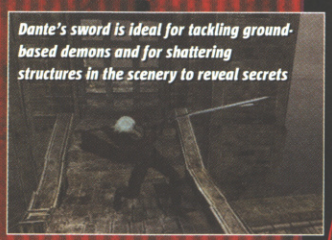
DANTE AND LUCIA

Dante and Lucia have unique moves that are great fun to master. However, while the paths they take through the game are different, all this means is that they approach the same areas from a different angle. To make matters worse, Lucia's adventure is much shorter than Dante's.

DANTE: Dante is the son of Sparda, a rogue demon who ended the devil's rule on earth many hundreds of years ago. With his trusty sword and twin pistols - Ebony and Ivory - Dante is a match for any demon

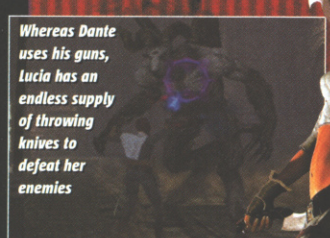


Now Dante can fire his guns in different directions and take out demons on both sides

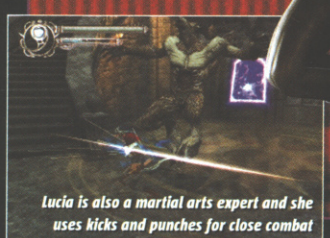


Dante's sword is ideal for tackling ground-based demons and for shattering structures in the scenery to reveal secrets

LUCIA: Flame-haired Lucia is another devil-hunter, but her roots are shrouded in mystery. As the game progresses, her history is revealed, with a few surprises



Whereas Dante uses his guns, Lucia has an endless supply of throwing knives to defeat her enemies



Lucia is also a martial arts expert and she uses kicks and punches for close combat

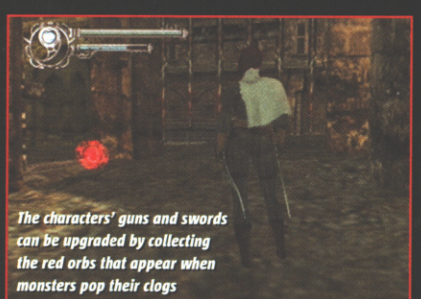
FATALLY FLAWED

Although DMC2 offers a thrilling, action-packed experience, it's plagued by problems that make it less satisfying than its classic predecessor.

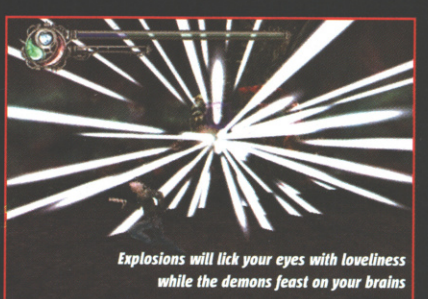
Once again, the camera is a major flaw. As the viewpoints are often fixed in a Resident Evil style, you'll find yourself using Dante's auto aim to blast enemies off screen, with only the monster's energy bar to judge how effective you're being. The creatures in DMC2 are fabulous, but what's the point when you're not able to see them half the time?

You'll come to love the targeting system but loathe the weird camera zoom

Dante's gray mop must be a result of the stressful demon-dispatching



The characters' guns and swords can be upgraded by collecting the red orbs that appear when monsters pop their clogs



Explosions will lick your eyes with loveliness while the demons feast on your brains

HUGE-O BOSS

Despite its problems, Devil May Cry 2 features some incredible bosses. From a man-eating plant to an oversized monkey, the end-of-level guardians are genuinely disturbing and you'll need split-second timing if you're to avoid their deadly attacks. Until you find their weak spot, at least...

The monsters in DMC2 are good, but we still prefer the demons from the first game

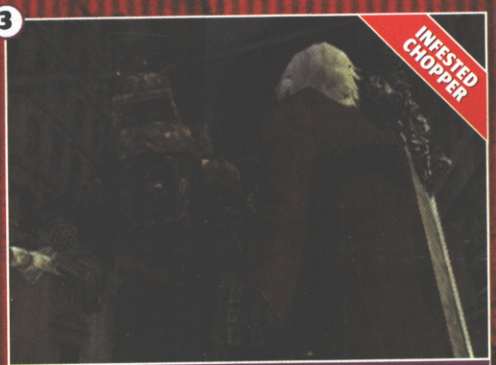
1

A big monkey with a bad attitude, Orangguerra can swing from overhead bars and crush your hero as he falls to the ground. Keep an eye on Orangguerra's shadow or you'll be flattened

2

Although he's surrounded by whipping tentacles, it's Jokatglum's head that needs to be blasted. Unfortunately, you can simply jump up and down to the side of Jokatglum and fill his noggin full of lead. Duh

3



Although it sounds like an unpleasant venereal disease, the Infested Chopper is one of the toughest bosses. You can try to escape it by skipping across the rooftops, but it'll catch up with you eventually

4

Nefasturris bursts out of a skyscraper in one of the most dramatic FMV sequences we've seen in years. When you destroy its body, Nefasturris's head chases Dante around the streets

Similarly, the cameras are placed too far away from the action, with Dante often appearing as a tiny figure on the screen. While this helps to create a sense of scale when dwarfed by the tower blocks, there's little point in having great attacks when you can't fully appreciate them.

Even the moves themselves are a problem. Although the characters can dispatch demons in a myriad of ways, their basic guns and knives are powerful enough to tackle even the biggest boss. Before long you'll find yourself leaping around the locations like a loon with your finger glued to the fire button, rather than risking an untimely death and being sent back to the start of the level.

Chop Arius into dogfood with Lucia's knives

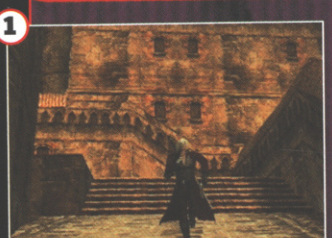
Many of the bosses also have unforgivable weak spots, and it's sometimes possible to stand in one spot and plug away until the creature collapses. DMC2 isn't a very long – around five hours per character – so being able to defeat the guardians this easily doesn't help.

Although DMC2 isn't a bad game, it becomes repetitive, frustrating and dull. Mastering Dante's moves is thrilling early on, but by the time you've reached the fifth boss there's nothing new. To kick undead ass, stick with Dante's original adventure. CVG

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Devil May Cry was famous for its highly detailed locations. This time the coders have created huge cities, with battles being waged in the open air. Although the locations aren't as detailed or charming as those seen in DMC, the sense of scale is breathtaking.

1

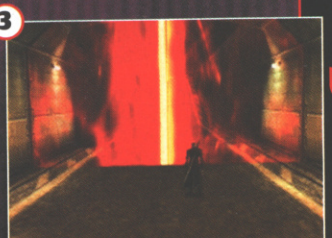


Much of the action is set in open city streets, inhabited by gangs of demons

2

Skipping along the rooftops is essential for avoiding nasties and finding treasure

3



To stop Dante and Lucia escaping, demons often form red force-fields to trap them

CVG VERDICT

A triumph of style over content, Devil May Cry 2 certainly looks the business but fails to deliver the killer gameplay we'd all hoped for. **Dave** CVG

GOOD VS BAD

- Thrilling action sequences
- Fantastic enemies
- Cool heroes

- Awful camera
- Action becomes repetitive
- Too easy

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Buffy The Vampire Slayer (XBOX), Tomb Raider (PSONE)

INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

The **original tomb-raider** and his whip **are back**

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **1**

COST: **TBC**

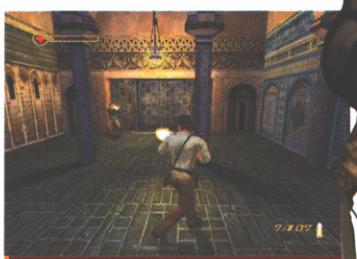
PUB: **ACTIVISION/LUCASARTS**

OUT: **FEB 28**

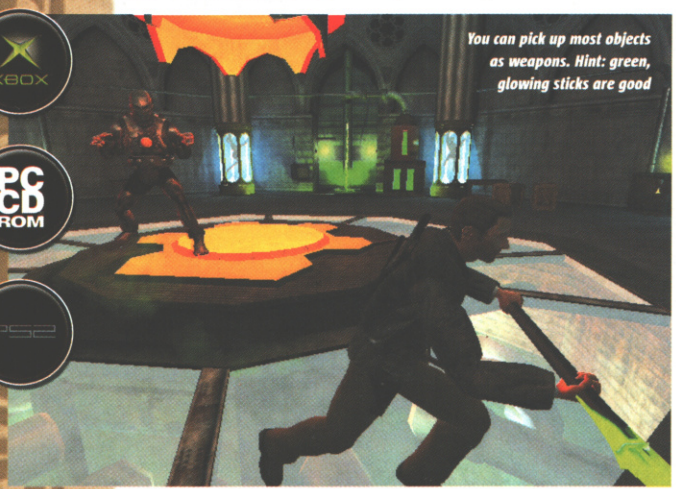
DEVELOPER: **THE COLLECTIVE**

URL: **WWW.LUCASARTS.COM/PRODUCTS/INDIANA**

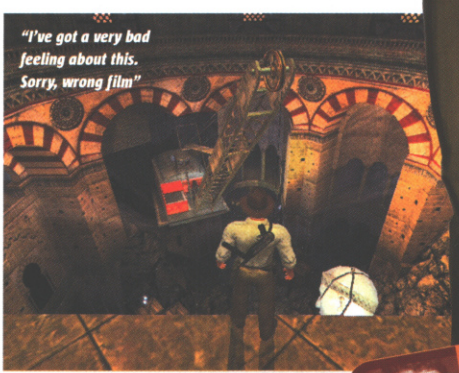
Before Lara Croft was in those shorts, before she was even in *nappies* in fact, Indiana Jones was adventuring. He's the ledge-jumping, Nazi-bashing, artefact-hoarding original. And with Lara *very* missing in action, Indy is the only person to turn to if you have a hankering for raiding tombs any time soon.



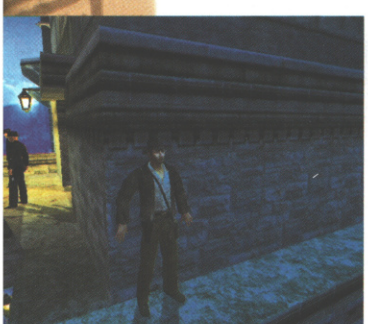
Lock-on for that side-step bullet fandango. Next stop Come Dancing finals, 2003



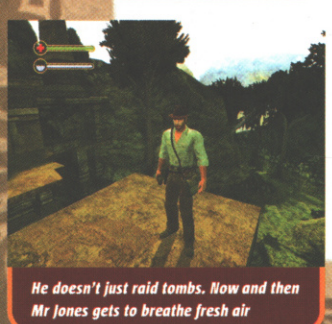
You can pick up most objects as weapons. Hint: green, glowing sticks are good



"I've got a very bad feeling about this. Sorry, wrong film"



Metal Gear who? Indiana Snake hides while two guards share their gardening tips

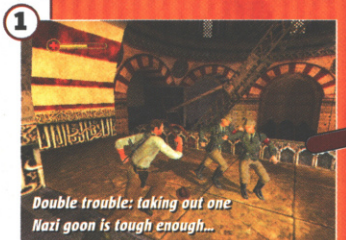


He doesn't just raid tombs. Now and then Mr Jones gets to breathe fresh air

FIGHT CLUB, INDY-STYLE

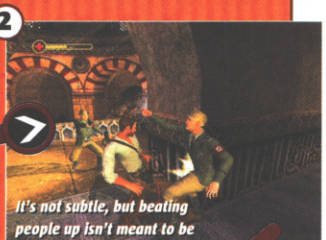
The fight engine that let you kick loads of vampire ass as the lovely Buffy now lets you beat up baddies as original rugged tomb-raiding hero Indiana. He's got fewer curves and staking's off the menu, but Indy has the classier moves, including using that whip again...

1



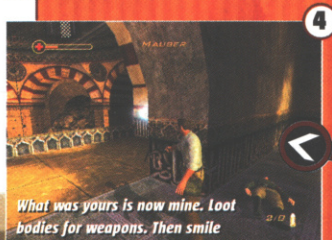
Double trouble: taking out one Nazi goon is tough enough...

2



It's not subtle, but beating people up isn't meant to be

4



What was yours is now mine. Loot bodies for weapons. Then smile

3

Still in trouble? Use your whip to snatch their weapons away

JUMP, PUNCH, PULL

The bad news first – there's nothing new here. Measuring tough jumps is on the menu, as is swinging about on your bullwhip and romping around ruins. Often all at the same time. On top of that there's shooting, stabbing and punching evil minions. And solving pretty simple lever, block and object puzzles. The game's about as predictable as a Mr Bean cock-up. But it isn't rubbish.

True, there's not been much innovation in the gameplay. But who cares when it's this enjoyable? Seeing familiar puzzles and goons doesn't wear thin quickly when it's done this well. Instead, it brings a nostalgic smile to the face, as if you're remembering the time the Christmas turkey exploded in Aunt Maud's face. Only it's better than that.

So what makes it fun? There's the graphics to start. Built on the engine used for the Buffy game, this is a feast

MONKEY PUZZLED?

As in it's so simple, even a gorilla could figure it out. Still don't think you're up to simian intelligence levels? Here's our ape-level guide to the kind of puzzles you'll face around here.

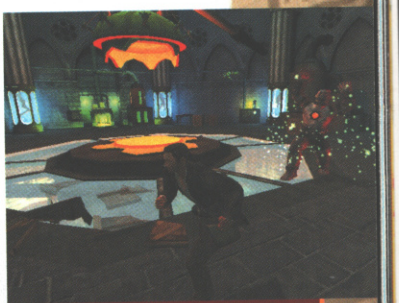
1. "Crown come in handy. Me take. Now where banana?"
2. "Me give demon statue crown? Ah. What for then?"
3. "Look, demon make pully things. Me pull them. Then climb tree?"
4. "Levers change dial. Right setting open door. Then me eat fleas."
5. "Even monkey solve this. Sun hand two, Moon hand four."

Indiana was feeling a little weary and decided to hitch a ride... A bad idea, maybe?

for the eyeballs. Gorgeous textures and effects, excellent character models and giant, open environments with lots of complexity. It's the best-looking action adventure yet.

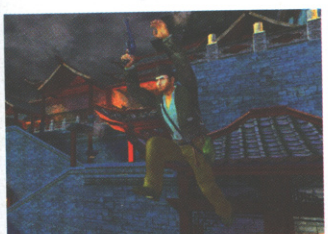
BIG, BAD WORLD

As well as looking sumptuous, all of the locations are well designed. A total of ten massive levels split into sub-sections see you raiding Prague, exploring Istanbul and, er, running around a lot in Hong Kong. Throughout, the puzzles are fun to solve and are interspersed with constant bouts of combat.



Hellish bosses don't look quite so scary when they're covered in radioactive gunk

Radioactive beaker instructions: lob 30 feet. Then run away. As fast as you can



Indy makes a lunging leap for freedom over a panorama of Chinese rooftops

The back streets of Hong Kong: a friendly car chase takes place punctuated by shots of equally friendly fire. Or maybe not

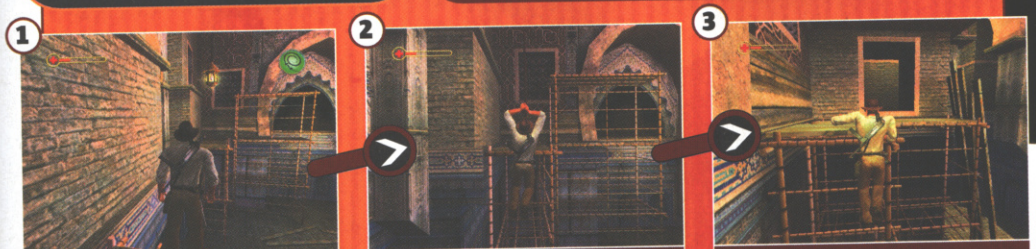
During fights, you can pick up chair legs and bottles, deal out punches and kicks, shoot or lob grenades, rope a thug and reel him in for a swift smack or our favourite – bullwhip enemies' weapons clean out of their hands.

Helpfully, there's a lock-on button which keeps you facing the bad guys when the action gets frenetic. A particularly handy feature because the camera control isn't great.

Other problems? The lack of invention does become an issue. After all, how many chasms can you jump before it gets boring? But even considering the repetitiveness, this is a fine cocktail of combat, exploration and puzzle-solving. Ms Croft has got her work cut out for her if she's going to top Indiana. OXM

WHIP-CRACK AWAY

Let's talk bullwhips. Kinky? Indiana isn't a connoisseur of leather-clad dodginess, as far as we're aware. Instead he uses his to swing from place to place via conveniently-placed objects such as stone crocodile heads, lanterns and giant hooks.



1. The green bullwhip logo means it's time for you to get into swinging action
2. Indiana can change direction while swinging, hopping off when he wants
3. Jump correctly and you'll end here. Do it wrong and you're street pizza

CVG VERDICT

Slick all-out action-adventuring with a feisty pace, ten very big levels and smooth graphics. Only let down by a slight lack of invention. **Mark** OXM

GOOD VS BAD

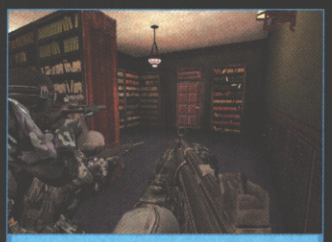
- Great graphics
- Classy levels
- Constant, relentless action

- Repetitive puzzles and enemies
- Camera gets in the way at times

8 OUT OF TEN

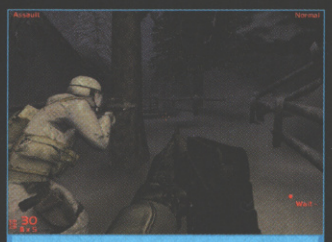
IF YOU LIKE THIS, TRY THESE...
- Buffy The Vampire Slayer (Xbox)
- Tomb Raider (PSone)

Real soldiers' guns are actually this big, obscuring almost half their field of vision



The crack squad of combatants lie in wait for the evil librarian to enter her lair

You can shoot the hostages that you've been sent to rescue, but you WILL go to hell



The level environments are superbly detailed, as are the soldiers and folk

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3: RAVEN SHIELD

For **team-based tension** and challenge, this is **where it's at**

PC CD ROM

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **1-8**

COST: **£29.99**

PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**

OUT: **MAR 21**

DEVELOPER: **RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT**

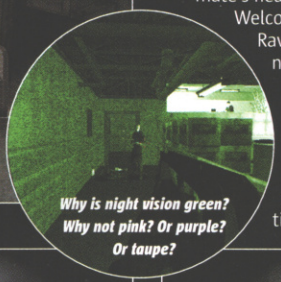
URL: **WWW.RAVEN-SHIELD.COM**

This is it. Your gloved hand reaches out for the door handle, your team-mates huddled closely behind you, moist with expectation. Your controlled exhalation makes no sound and you eke open the door, inch by calculated inch. From the corner of your eye you detect a clump of hair, bobbing steadily like a beach ball on the sea. You train your crosshairs on the centre of the bushy mass, delicately squeezing the trigger.

Charging enemies head-on in this game is a bloody stupid thing to do

Thhhuuuud! The screen turns black and you watch in gormless horror as your brain spills out of the side of your head like crimson porridge. So much for all those years of training. So much for all the pre-planning. You've just been killed by some toothless, bandana-wearing simpleton hiding behind the filing cabinet on the other side of the room.

But you didn't spot him, did you? You were too busy trying to part his mate's head from his body, right? Welcome to the world of Raven Shield, Hotshot. Or not, as the case may be.

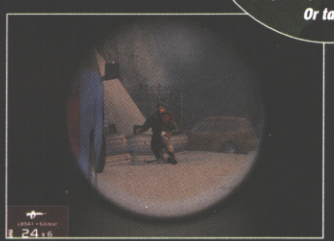


Why is night vision green? Why not pink? Or purple? Or taupe?

HAIRY MOMENTS

Frustration. That's what you'll be feeling as you load up the same level for the 20th time in this excellent

Take time out from the horrors of war to admire the ironwork



The joys of sniping laid bare. Thud-unk!

The Abominable Snowman is caught head-on

PLANNING PREVENTS PRETTY DAMN POOR PERFORMANCE

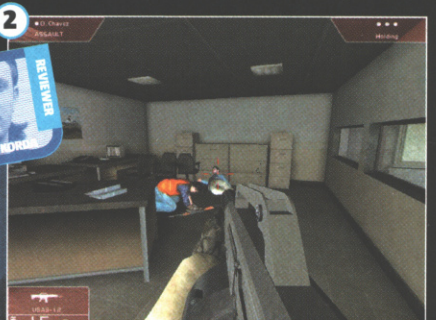
Don't like shooting? Fed up with always getting killed in the first 20 seconds of each mission? Well, you've got two options.

1

REVIEWER MARTIN KIRBY

Spend hours poring over the massively in-depth tactical screen, then your team tries to do what you couldn't

2



Switch on the auto-aim option like a cheating little git, and it's guaranteed (almost) you'll never miss an enemy again

THE BEST OF THE BEST

One of the reasons you'll find yourself replaying missions so many times is that you won't want to lose your best men too early. You only have a finite number of special-forces troops to take through the game, of which only a few are hardened veterans. Lose them too early and you've got no chance. A mixture of crack-shots and crap-shots is usually your best bet for each mission. Just pray the terrorists pick off the cack-handed ones first.

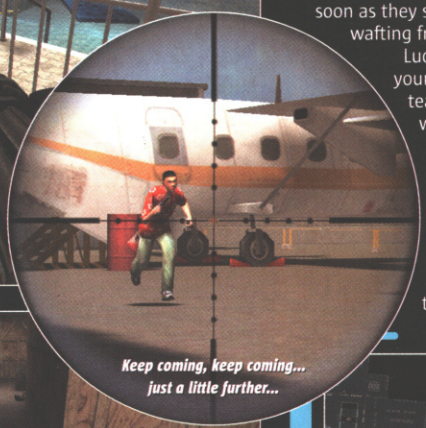
1

Choose your fellow heroes from an extensive selection of uniformed testosterone-enhanced hulks

2

If you don't aim your gun, you can't shoot terrorists and, er, you're likely to die! Sorry, but that's the way of the world, soldier

Look lads, this is no time for a dip, we've got work to do



Keep coming, keep coming... just a little further...

"The terrorists are over this way." "No they're not, Bert, they're over here!"

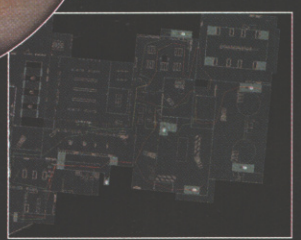
third instalment of the team-based special forces shooter series. Why? Because its 15 missions are all harder than a worse-for-wear Glaswegian. Your enemies are so accurate they could shoot the proboscis off a gnat from the other side of the world, and so twitchy they'll kill their hostages as soon as they smell the tension wafting from your armpits.

Luckily, you're not on your own. You've got a team of sharp shooters who will accompany you on each mission, and who can be equipped with a whole range of weapons – 40 in all – and given specific orders to kill anything they see. And that includes gerbils. Yep, these people are that damn mean.

TOO... HARD...

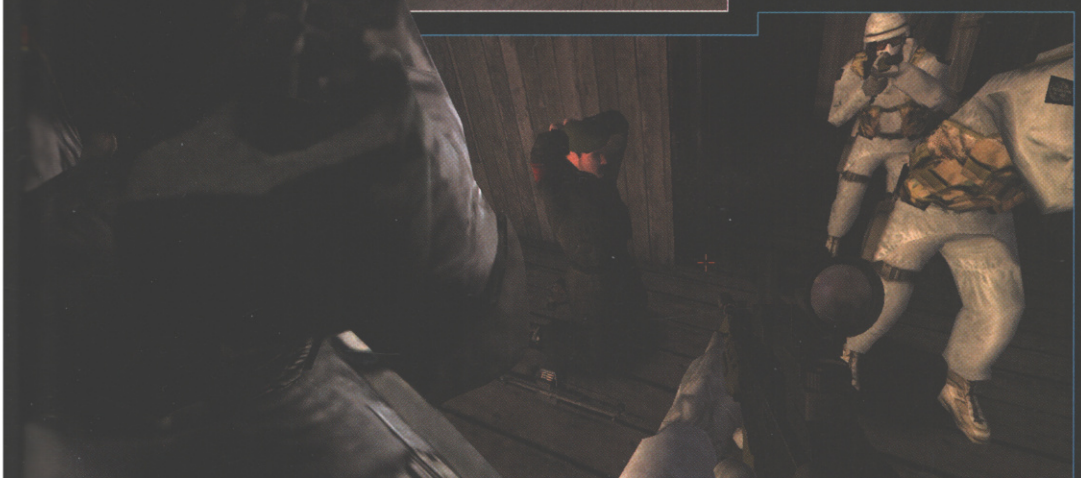
Graphically, sonically and most importantly follow-through-in-yer-pantsically (that's a military term, by the way), Raven Shield is a belter. But be prepared to have your willpower and patience tested more thoroughly than a monk in a free brothel by the teeth-grinding difficulty of it all.

However, if you have the skill and the perseverance, and you can put up with the lack of mission variety – there are a lot of hostage rescue levels – you'll find weeks (months, if you're a bit crap) of anti-terrorist action here, even if you do get to see your innards spill out of you 263,000 times in the process. Freedom's a precious thing and doesn't come cheap, you know. CVG



Wanna see where your team-mates have gone? You can find out here

Blah, blah, blah. This ain't no time for talking, just let me at 'em



Simon says, "Take off that stupid hat!". This no time for playing games...

That's one hell of a powerful torch. Oh

CVG VERDICT

Will have you well and truly gripped but the box-like levels, supreme difficulty and over-reliance hostage rescue may discourage some. **Martin** CVG

GOOD VS BAD

- Looks fantastic
- Unrivalled tension
- Superb attention to detail

- Waaaaay too hard
- Too many hostage rescue missions
- On the boxy side

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... IGI 2: Covert Strike (PC); A Tom Clancy novel

8 OUT OF TEN

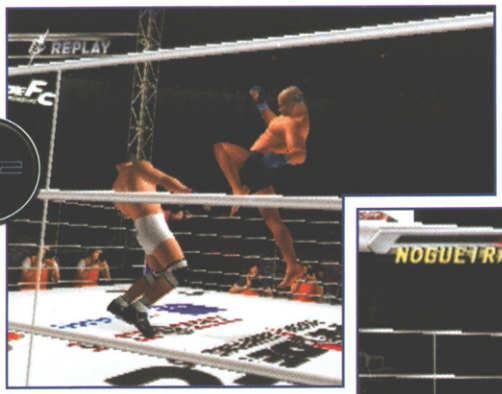
PRIDE FC FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

The world's toughest prepare for supreme beats

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: THQ
OUT: MARCH 21
DEVELOPER: ANCHOR
URL: WWW.THQ.COM/GAMES

We've been banging on about Pride being something to keep an eye on for the last few months here at CVG. Well, now it's arrived and we've been keeping more than just an eye on it – our hands have been clamped around the pads and only a particularly painful leg lock will make us submit to stop playing.

Bouts can be over in seconds or drawn out if both fighters are evenly matched



Pride doesn't have many rules. You can use your knees to attack but not the elbow

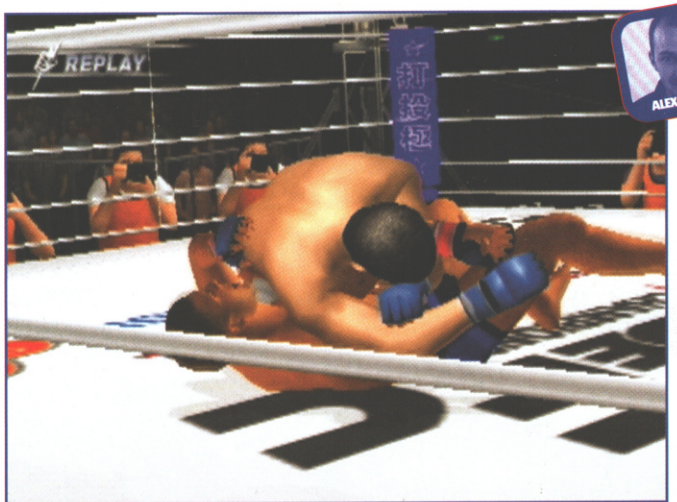
Another brutal but legal move is hitting the back of someone's head repeatedly!

Grappling on the canvas is a real test of strength

DO KEEP UP

In case you haven't heard about it yet, Pride is a real mixed martial arts contest that is currently huge in Japan where live bouts can play to crowds of over 50,000 people. Fighters from around the globe compete in each contest. Best of all, the fighter can be a master of whatever discipline he wants, whether it's kickboxing, wrestling, jiu-jitsu or... you name it.

It all makes for a great sport and a cool game too, due to a wide roster of fighters to choose from and plenty of devastating moves. What's more, any attacking move can be countered or reversed, making bouts flow satisfyingly back and forth.

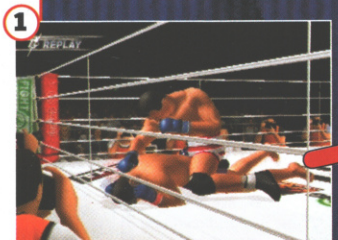


The elbow's connected to the... not any more it ain't! Pride FC rewrites the biology text book...

One of Nogueira's strengths is forcing submissions when he's vulnerable

IT'S A PITY...

It's a shame Pride isn't on TV screens in the UK because the attention to detail in the game is pretty stunning. One strange point is that the US commentary team can be seen at ringside, but there's no commentary in the game. A pity as play-by-play commentary would help newbies get a grip on what's actually going on in the ring.

1


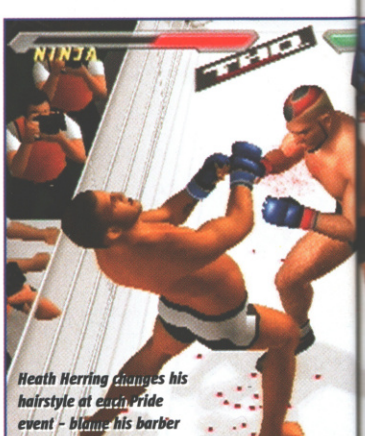
Bas Rutten and Stephen Quadros sit at ringside, but you can't hear them

2

All the fighters have their own unique entrance routines and movies

3

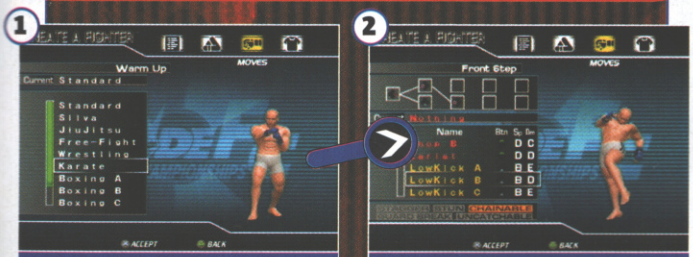
The scantily-clad Pride girls appear between rounds. It all adds to the realism



Heath Herring changes his hairstyle at each Pride event – blame his barber

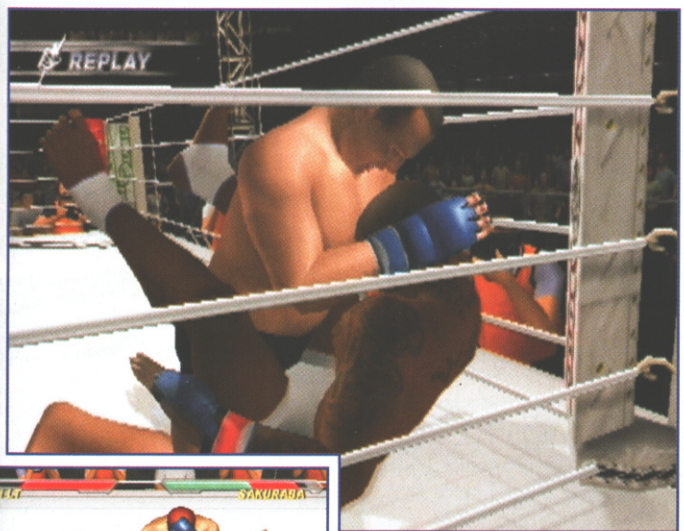
MORE OF THIS, PLEASE

Pride's Create-A-Fighter mode is one of the most impressive around. You might not be able to dress your creation up that much but it's the moves that are the real meat and two veg of the game. By choosing your fighter's moves and combos you can go so far as to create your very own martial art. Now how cool is *that*?



You can choose your moves by stealing from real fighters' repertoires

Then just string the moves together to create your own unique combos

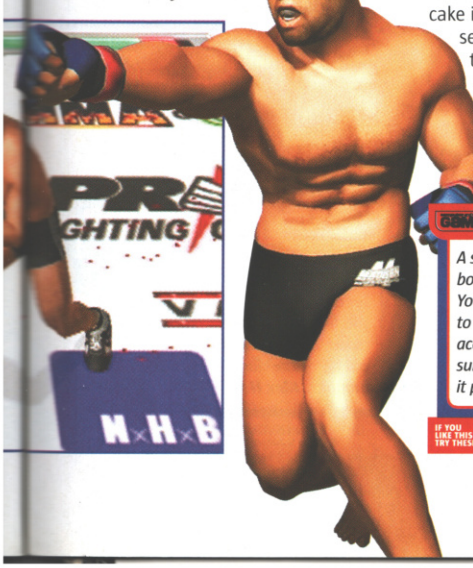


Even when your health bar is low, you can force a full-health opponent to submit

A towering kickboxing champion versus a tiny wrestler – only in Pride!

Reversals are important as most fights are won by making your opponent submit by putting them in a very painful hold. Pride boasts a smart control system, similar to the one in the UFC series, but the wealth of fighting styles makes it the more impressive game.

The blood-spattered icing on the cake is the training mode, which helps separate the button-bashers from the dedicated and the bonus of one of the better Create-A-Fighter modes we've seen. You might not know the real sport well, but this is still a realistic fighter worth picking up.



VERDICT

A strong fighter that is both smart and brutal. You may not be able to appreciate how accurate it is but you're sure to enjoy the way it plays. **Alex H**

GOOD VS BAD

- Mixed fighting styles
- Great fighting system
- Faithful recreation
- Blood, but no facial damage. Strange
- Some poor body clipping

8 OUT OF TEN

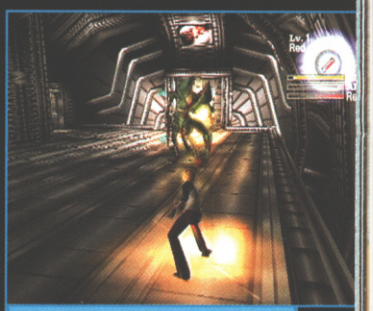
IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... WWE SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth (PS2) Virtua Fighter 4 (PS2)

GALERIANS:ASH

Mutant kids doing drugs

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: SAMMY EUROPE
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: POLYGON
URL: WWW.SAMMY-ZONE.COM/GASH



The Red chemical sets susceptible foes on fire. A potent little tool

Rion was an abused child prisoner in the first game, hence the dog collar

Sinners don't do drugs. Mutant children created by a megalomaniac supercomputer, on the other hand, do.

Dorothy, the supercomputer in question, has created a race of human-like beings called Galerians. The Galerians are able to use various chemical stimulants to create psychic effects, most often used as weapons.

Rion, the hero from the first game, is one such Galerian, but only until he can rescue his cryogenically-frozen human self from stasis and transfer his memories and thoughts from his scary Galerian brain to his regular human one.

So the setting is a bit baffling, but it also serves as the backdrop to a mature and enjoyable action game that borrows horror elements from Resi and Silent Hill and a stylish futuristic techno-punk groove from Final Fantasy VII and Fear Effect.

D-Felon lets you levitate your enemies for a sustained dose of significant damage

The action is derivative, and occasionally frustrating in places – especially when doors lock behind you, sealing you in a room full of mutant freaks with no drugs to help you pop their heads.

Still, there's no doubting the power of the story and superb cutscenes to draw you in.

You can deflect enemy missiles by putting the handy psychic shield to use

VERDICT

Enjoyably unpleasant, if you see what we mean, Galerians: Ash is a game that's sure to disturb, frustrate and thrill in equal measures. **Lee**

GOOD VS BAD

- Brilliant cutscenes
- Drug system is original
- Vile monsters
- Graphics not great
- Too many doors lock behind you
- Unbalanced difficulty

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Conflict Zone (PS2) O.R.B. (PC)

TENCHU 3 Wrath Of Heaven™

You'll spend most of the game rubbing up against walls in a sultry fashion. Perhaps

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
OUT: MARCH 7
DEVELOPER: K2
URL: WWW.TENCHUWRATH.COM

It'll stab you in the back!

Obscure your face behind a scarf, put on some pyjamas, practise your somersaults and you too could be a ninja. Yes, Rikimaru, star of the original Tenchu, is back and once again he's trying to right wrongs in feudal Japan by sneaking up on people and slicing and dicing them into crimson showers.

KHAN!

Wrath Of Heaven is the third entry in the Tenchu series, one that adds plenty of new features. Alongside returning characters Rikimaru and Ayame, there's a new character, Tesshu, to play as.

Everybody was kung fu fighting! Notice the intense concentration on the protagonists' faces

REVIEWER ALEX HUHTALA

A vicious two-player fight takes place in all its graphic, split-screen glory

When farts attack: tikka masala and lager were apparently big in feudal Japan

Marilyn Manson makes an apparent guest appearance. He could really use a tan

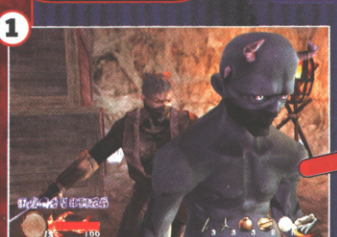
The three characters have unique abilities that make tackling the same level feel very different. Rikimaru, for instance, is a good all-rounder, with powerful attacks; Ayame is faster on her feet. The levels also have several routes through them, allowing you to ignore some of the goals if you find an alternative route, although this can sometimes lead to confusion.

Special moves can now be unlocked by performing ten stealth kills in a level. This is worth doing as some of the new abilities are very cool and creeping up on guards undetected is more forgiving than in the previous games. There's also the addition of a two-player mode, allowing you to fight friends or play cooperatively through a variety of mini missions.

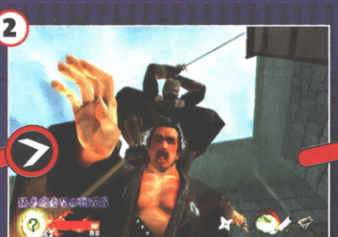
If you're a fan of the original Tenchu, there's a lot to like here, but unlike some sequels Wrath Of Heaven doesn't feel like a massive improvement over its predecessors. CVG

CHOP SUEY

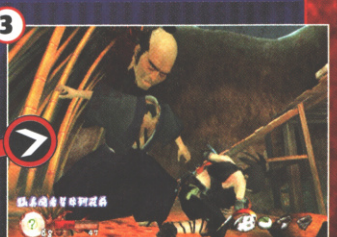
If there's one thing that you'll go crazy for in Tenchu, it's sneaking up on an opponent and giving them a quick taste of your sword. Sure, there's been stealth action in tons of recent titles, but what other stealthy game lets you slit throats and chop off people's heads? It may not be morally sound, but it sure is good.

1. 

Rikimaru sneaks up on an unsuspecting foe

2. 

That's going to hurt! The power of foresight

3. 

Ayame isn't averse to decapitation herself

CVG VERDICT

Slow-starting and quite challenging, Tenchu 3 is great if you like stealth and blood, but you may be put off by the clunky graphics. **Alex H**

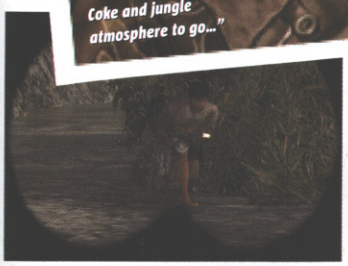
GOOD VS BAD

- Stealthy action
- Violent deaths
- Lots of bad guys
- Blocky graphics
- Camera sometimes clumsy
- Too much like Tenchu 1

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Splinter Cell (Xbox, PC, PS2); MGS 2 Substance (Xbox, PS2)

7 OUT OF TEN

The swearing and the music come straight out of 'Nam films



All the weapons are realistically recreated

The jungle doesn't look or feel quite right

VIETCONG

Welcome to the jungle. You're gonna die

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **1-32**

COST: **£29.99**

PUBLISHER: **TAKE 2**

OUT: **21 MAR**

DEVELOPER: **PTERODON**

URL: **WWW.VIETCONG-GAME.COM**

FOREVER FRIENDS

Real-life war is not only noisy; you also get to see your closest buddies die in gut-wrenchingly horrible ways. Not so in Vietcong, though. Here your team-mates are immortal.

1

You can have up to six other soldiers in your team but don't you fret about them...

Despite the soldiers you can command, there are hardly any tactics

After growing up on the likes of Full Metal Jacket, Platoon and Apocalypse Now, we were looking forward to wading knee-deep through muddy water, swatting mosquitoes off our fevered, bandana-clad foreheads and getting lost in uncomfortably humid rainforests.

Vietcong doesn't do too bad a job of it, but it's far from the game it could have been.

PC CD ROM

THE SMELL OF NAPALM

As part of an elite force of soldiers stationed in Vietnam in 1967, you're shipped from mission to mission, wiping out VC forces and helping villagers. You usually have a team at your disposal but there's not much you can order them to do, except heal you and pass the ammo.

But the real problem is that it doesn't look or feel anything like the Vietnam we've seen in the movies. It's all too fake and washed out, and doesn't convey the heat, humidity and lushness you'd expect.

There's a great '60s rock 'n' roll soundtrack and there are some exciting moments when the enemy surrounds you and intense battles ensue, bullets and screams thickening the air. The multiplayer is also fun, especially in cooperative mode. In the end, though, this is a disappointing proper first outing for the war the Americans lost. CVG

2

No matter how many bullets the guys take, the doctor will always patch them up

CVG VERDICT

Some intense fire fights and great rock 'n' roll tunes can't make up for the poor graphics and lack of atmosphere and realism. **Mark** CVG

GOOD VS BAD

- Intense battles
- Great soundtrack
- Fun co-op online mode

- Terrible missions
- Weak graphics
- Immortal team-mates

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Medal Of Honor (PS2), Soldier Of Fortune II (PC)

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE: EPISODE I & II

The best gets even better

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-4
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: SONIC TEAM
URL: WWW.SEGA.COM/GAMES/POST_GAMEGAME.JHTML?PRODID=10113

In Challenge mode destroy endless creatures

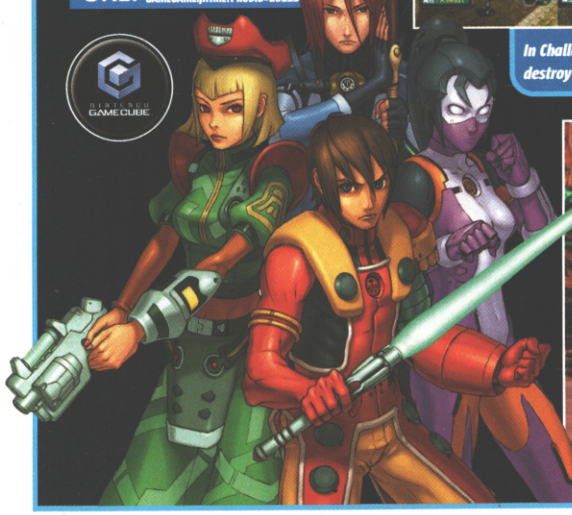
The price of uniting the games-playing world in peaceful adventuring unison was never going to come cheap.

Not only do you need to buy the game, the modem, an ISP and a regular (though great value) 30-day £5.99 Hunter's Licence to play online, you also have to sacrifice your social life and possibly even your personal hygiene in order to save planet Ragol with like-minded international adventurer pals.

Split-screen adventuring in the main game doesn't have any noticeable slow-down

STAR ME KITTEN

Phantasy Star Online is as much of a revelation on Cube as it was on Dreamcast. Better yet, you get so many extras and refinements – including a whole new adventure to blast through – you're likely to find this the most complete multiplayer console experience around.



The much-loved but impossibly tough dragon boss will eat you whole

REVIEWER
LEE SKITTRELL

Magic, gunfights and hand-to-hand combat

SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II

Pick it up in an instant, but never put it down.

Classic puzzling action, Street Fighter-stylee

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COST: £29.99
DEVELOPER: ATOMIC PLANET
OUT: NOW
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
URL: WWW.CAPCOM.COM

GAME BOY ADVANCE

This classic puzzler had a cult following on PSone but never really broke through to the masses in the same way Tetris did. Almost six years later it's punching its way back into the limelight and now it's about time you lot sat up and took notice. Here's why.

The concept is simple – different-coloured gems drop from top to bottom and you've got to group like-coloured blocks together. Bind four and they become a super block. Add more still and they grow even bigger, and so on until you've got the mother of all gems.

You then shatter these monster blocks using the catalyst orbs that also fall from the top. This throws a load of blocks over to your opponent's side and when they fill right to the top it's game over.

There are eight characters (plus extra hidden ones) that scrap in the middle while you throw the blocks down, pulling off Dragon Punches and chucking fireballs when you dump a fat load of blocks on your opponent. And while they don't actually add anything to the gameplay, apart from change the order in which the blocks fall, it all helps make this one of the finest puzzle games we've ever played.

It may be a puzzle game, but head-to-head battles are as intense as any beat 'em up

VERDICT

Simple to pick up but boasts enough depth, variety and hidden extras to keep you hooked for months. Essential GBA stuff.
Alex S

GOOD VS BAD

- Staggeringly addictive
- Bursting with character
- You ain't gonna like it if you don't like puzzlers

9 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Kuru Kuru Kururin (GBA), Tetris (GBC)

MAKE FRIENDS, NOT WAR

As any war veteran will tell you, the friends you make in battle are the friends you keep for life. In PSO you meet fellow adventurers from around the world and converse with them via the in-game translator. Construct set sentences in English and the software cleverly translates your question into other European languages and Japanese as well. Amazing.

1

Get yourself one of these for around £30 and you're good to go

2

It even translates this into English. Like in Star Trek, only cooler

You can play the two episodes offline alone or with pals in split-screen, but online play is where PSO rockets into the stratosphere. Meet fellow adventurers from around the world, chat to Johnny Foreigner using the gob-smacking universal translator and embark on quests that are constantly updated and enhanced.

Another incredibly tough boss fight

The wolves are easy enough to kill, but they hunt in large packs so watch your ass!

The sense you get of cooperation and team responsibility is staggering and you can expect to be playing for well over 100 hours before you bust both episodes on and offline.

Players wanting epic plotting will be disappointed, but everything else on offer here really hammers home the fact there is no better game to launch GameCube's online service, and currently no better online console adventure.

VERDICT

Great single-player and absolutely jaw-dropping online. The best online console game currently available. Will destroy your social life. **Lee**

GOOD VS BAD

- Universal translator is amazing
- Almost limitless play time
- Similar to DC original
- Relentless combat not for some

9 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... EverQuest: Planes Of Power (PC), Project Eden (PS2)

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: KOEI EUROPE
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: KOEI
URL: WWW.KOEIGAMES.COM

CRIMSON SEA

Pure bloody slaughter

If variety is the spice of life then Crimson Sea is the videogame equivalent of falling into a giant silo filled with exotic seasonings from around the world and sneezing yourself to death. Merging a whole bunch of high-octane action styles, Crimson Sea is an original and zesty Xbox shooter that lets you tear through literally thousands of enemy bug-like critters called Mutons.

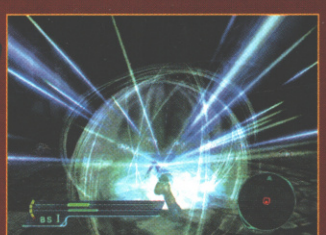
YO' MAMA'S A MUTON

The various level challenges range from slaying certain amounts of enemies to collecting the required quota of energy cells so that you can detect cunning enemies disguised as humans with your crazy radar skills. But whatever the challenge, the action is always fast, frantic and with an emphasis on pure shooting and mass Muton murder. Amazingly intricate weapons upgrades become available as you play, and as you recruit new fighters for your cause you can use them in battle, issuing them commands so they fight by your side.

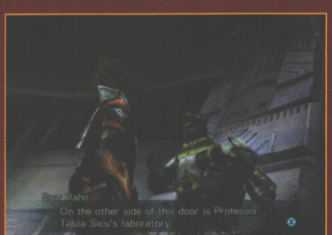
Crimson Sea is a winning mix of playing styles and insane shooting action, and only a lack of graphical wow-factor and a weird stuck-to-the-hero's-back viewpoint put dampeners on the otherwise top-notch action.

This section is played out on conveyor belts with electrodes to dodge

He's behind you! Use the quick-turn move to zap those evil-looking bugs



Special attacks rock the screen and take out multiple enemies at once



You'll learn new info and get new missions when exploring the hubs

VERDICT

Huge guns, screen-splintering special effects and thousands of enemies make for an enjoyable and original Xbox blaster. **Lee**

GOOD VS BAD

- Mix of play styles
- Insane amount of enemies
- Mental guns
- Strange forward-facing viewpoint
- Graphics a bit plain
- Nonsense story

6 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Gun Valkyrie (Xbox), Mystic Heroes (GC)

DEAD OR ALIVE® XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
OUT: MARCH 14
DEVELOPER: TECMO
URL: WWW.DOAXBV.COM

When you first became Master Chief on Xbox, bet you never thought 'horny girl volleyball' would be on your hit list of games. But when Elvis was The King, he never thought guys would get famous by spinning and mixing records either. Things change, usually for the better.

People can go off and like whatever they want, so long as there's a good reason. What passed as class in '93 is a lot different to what we enjoy in '03 . And... oh, how we struggle to tell you what it is that makes DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball so cool!

PERVY PASSTIME

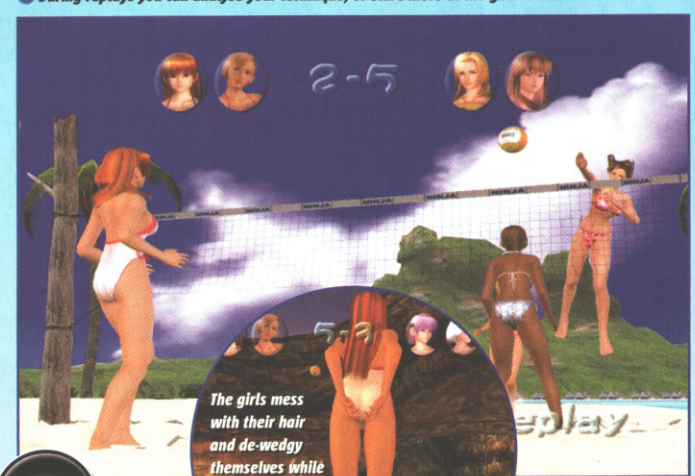
The main reason for spending time with DOAXBV is, of course, the girls. You spend 14 days on a remote sunny island as one of these eight honeys, aiming to impress the others with your volleyball skills and an uncanny knack for gift-giving. Things are going well if everyone loves your presents and they can't wait to hang out and play 'ball with you all day. Things suck if nobody partners with you and all your gifts are thrown in the bin the day they're received.

Do things right and you'll become a regular Rockerfeller with stacks of cash to buy exotic items in the island's three shops. You'll want to take away the most expensive and revealing swimwear in the Sports Shop ASAP – for obvious reasons. But you can only afford good stuff when you've charmed a girl into being your partner using trinkets from the accessory shop, and Zack of all Trades (see Victoria's Secret box). Only then can you start competing at volleyball for big bucks.

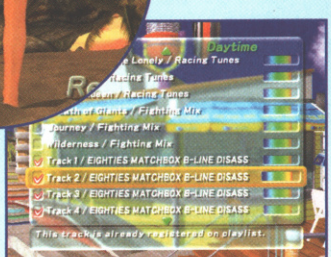
So it's a dating game. So what? There's justification for it all, in the form of a not-half-bad volleyball simulation. You've only got two buttons to worry about, Attack and Receive, plus the behaviour of your

Volleyball is the **key to joy**

During replays you can analyse your technique, or stare more at the girls' backsides. Your choice



An age setting decides how the girls behave, but we've not seen much difference



Upload your own tunes to listen to via the jukebox. Save yourself from La Aguilera!

The weird alien dude is Zack, dressed in the craziest outfit since Funkadellic said "Free your mind and your ass will follow"

VICTORIA'S SECRET

Tina, Christie and the rest are very particular about what they enjoy. It's at Zack of all Trades that the most effective persuasive weapons are available. Replica handguns, guitars and cushions sit side by side on the shelves. Although it's safer to buy from the standard accessory shop, hitting the nail on the head with a Zack special is worth the gamble.

1

There's all kinds of crazy stuff for sale in Zack of all Trades, including a prototype Xbox

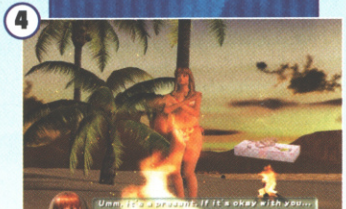
2

Kasumi loves anything cute. Don't go near Christie with stuff like this, though

3

Buying for others is better in the long run, but it doesn't hurt to treat yourself too

4



We found that Kasumi and Hitomi get along great, especially if you give the right things

Do a slamming special move and enemies will back away from you in trepidation

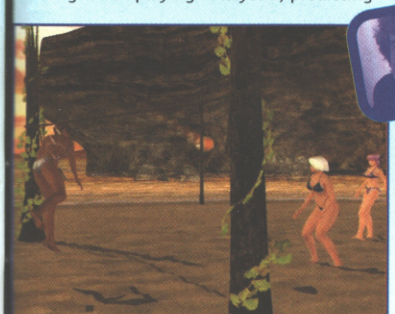
partner. As per the god of volleyball's decree, you have three touches of the ball to get it over the net. This means you have two touches to set up a decent Spike (smash), or nudge it somewhere that's tough to reach.

FOR YOUR SINS

Volleyball in the main game, Zack's Island, is for one player only, and is played in the context of an adventure. Your partner is less predictable in this mode, since how well she plays is related to the amount of successful bribing involved. In the two-player option, Exhibition, you can partner with any girl and instruct her to play with 'Confident', 'Unwilling' or plain 'Usual' tendencies.

A confident girl gets in at the net, going for blocks and spikes. The unwilling ones let you take care of the action while providing support. A partner with usual behaviour plays offensively or defensively depending on where you stand, and where she's manually positioned, using the right-hand analog stick.

Since we seem to have become good at playing volleyball, predicting moves, taking advantage, etc., we are mostly convinced that this is a decent volleyball sim, no matter what. And half-naked computer girlies are nice to watch in the replays, eh what, eh?



When your team is on form they'll spike shots with extra power, causing motion blur

In a two-player Exhibition match you need to decide on your partner's playing style

HONEY WITH THE MONEY

Humiliating a sulking Christie/Lei Fang team to a 7-1 win gives you quite a buzz and a fat wallet. You've money to spend and the will to do it so the place to go is the Casino. Now pay attention here because there's more to this place than you first realise.

While playing Blackjack or Poker you'll see that all cards have pictures of the girls, wearing various outfits. On the fruit machines, take note of the icons relevant to the girl whose picture is on the machine. Clues are everywhere, helping you choose the most appropriate gifts, in turn ensuring that you get the right girl to guarantee even bigger winnings at volleyball. Genius, innit!

We've found there is no middle ground with opinions where this game is concerned, so it has been a tough one to review. Dead Or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball is an oddball, but a spectacularly presented oddball. It's quality, and you can clearly see that in all the detail.

The thing that upsets serious gamers is the mystery of why anyone would want to spend time dressing up girls just to play volleyball or roulette. But, come on, it's obvious! Thinking about buying it? We say: guuaaarn!

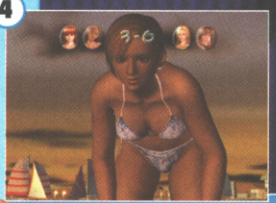
LOOK BUT DON'T TOUCH

When you're not playing volleyball or working the bribes, it's pleasant to visit a quiet beach or jungle glade. Your girl of the fortnight enjoys sprawling around, rubbing against the floor and other such titillating activities. Meanwhile you can adjust your view of the spectacle, zooming in and out and panning around for the best frame. Some wax these girls use.

1 While your girl is relaxing you can look her up, down and sideways and she won't slap your face

2 Another form of relaxation is this hopping game. If you're good at it, you can make extra cash

3 For some reason you are sometimes made to stare at this muskrat instead. Nice... muskrat



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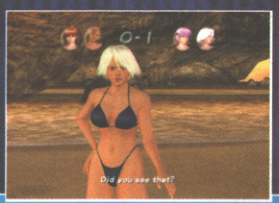
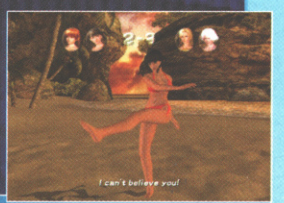
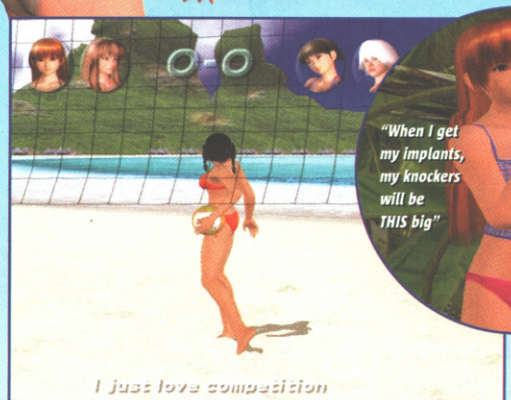




You can muck around with the camera when the girls strike their winning poses too. Unless you feel shamed, of course



Pre-match jibes give you an indication of how up for it the girls are

It's surprising to see how many subtleties of movement there are during rallies

Look for clues on what to buy for the girls. The fruit machines are very helpful

You'll waste hours and most of your cash in the casino. Look at the cards for clues

VERDICT

You'll either love it or hate it. Own it or strongly disown it. We'd like to call fans of the first option in both cases our very good friends. **Paul**

GOOD VS BAD

- Decent two-player
- Sexy gals not wearing much
- Secrets to solve
- Volleyball is NOT the new football
- These gals ain't real, fellers

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRYTHESE... Dead or Alive 3 (Xbox) Sam Fox Strip Poker (Spectrum)

8 OUT OF TEN

GUILTY GEAR X2

Heavy Metal **ruck and rile!**

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **2**
COST: **£29.99**
PUBLISHER: **SAMMY**
OUT: **MARCH**
DEVELOPER: **ARC SYSTEM WORKS**
URL: **WWW.GUILTYGEARX.COM/GGX/INDEXENG.HTML**

Sure, the appeal of 2D fighters has diminished to almost nothing in recent years, and we're not here to argue their cause. But CVG will always stand by quality, and X2, the sequel to last year's Guilty Gear X for PS2, is a masterpiece.

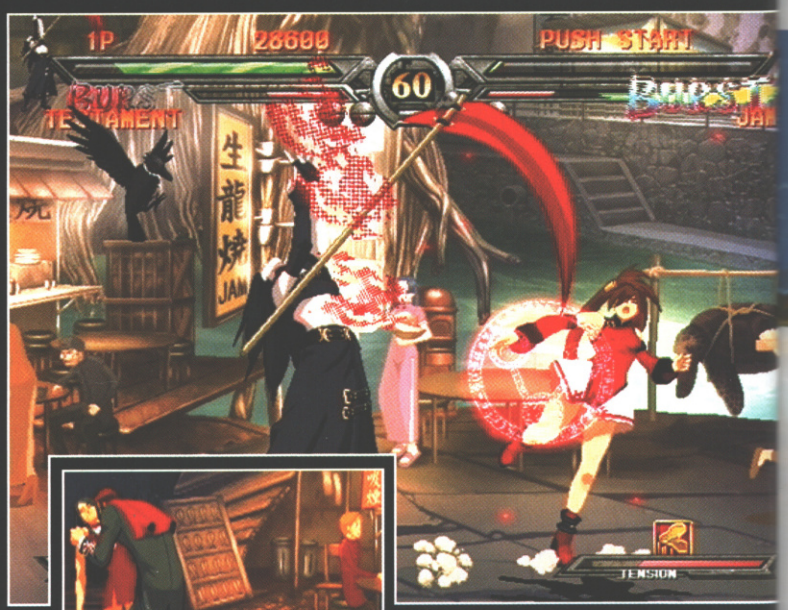
If you love your 2D fighters, buy GGX2 without a second thought. Thank us for the tip later. If 2D fighters usually turn your stomach, this could be the one to turn your head, if not spin it right around altogether.

OLD-SKOOL BREAKTHROUGH

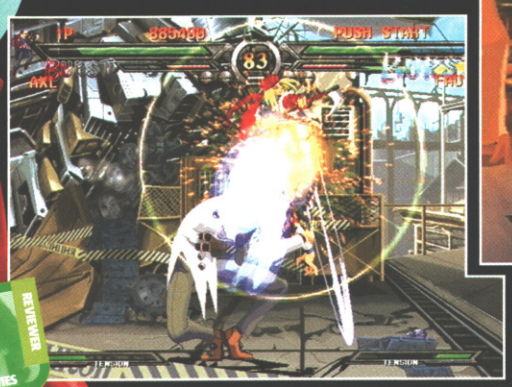
GGX2 is a blast because of the hilarious but very clever displays of power. Guilty Gear X was technical enough to begin with, but Arc System Works has dug deeper and stretched even further with X2.

In MOM Mode you beat people up for cash

Some of the dialogue in Story Mode is funny as



Testament uses all kinds of hexes to hurt you



A Burst attack gives you a split-second defence barrier, hopefully stunning the other guy out of a combo

You've got to admire the detail in this game. This is Slayer, before a fight

The game has so many layers of techniques to master that you'll be practising to your grave. Yep, you're aiming to string together the kinds of combos men will write songs about in years to come! To keep the action fair, a new Burst technique allows you to break through crushing combos... but only if your timing is sweet.

There's so much to contend with in GGX2, even in its basic arcade state – single-player versus the computer, or versus a human challenger. Doesn't stop there, though. The PS2 version is packed with a cute Story mode, various Survival modes, secret characters and super powers to unlock. Rest assured, you won't be left feeling short-changed. OG

FOUR FRENZIED FREAKS

The list of gameplay revisions and additions in X2 are worthy of a sequel alone. However, the most obviously beneficial new features are the four new cast members. Like everything else in X2, the newcomers all look terrific and boast astonishing cool moves!

BRIDGET: Her magic yo-yos transform into a floating teddy bear and fireballs! She can ride on them too, to gain some real speed

I-NO: This rock 'n' roll witch-woman uses her guitar and mike stand to make it hurt. Her hat bites too – how cool is that?

SLAYER: A vampire who uses a tiny cape to inflict hellish towel whips as she moves in close for a mouthful of flesh

ZAPPA: This kid's ghost takes on many forms. It's similar to how the 'Stands' work in Jo Jo's Capcom, but more fun than that

VERDICT

A weird but seriously entertaining fighter that would spice up any PS2 library. If this were a rock concert, we'd be down the front havin' it! **Paul** OG

GOOD VS BAD

- Great combo system
- Cool characters
- Great soundtrack
- Tons of extra modes
- 'Training' mode is only 'Practice'
- Its full-on heavy metal flavour

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Capcom vs SNK (PS2), Tekken 4 (PS2)

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA® A LINK TO THE PAST®

ESSENTIAL CVG ESSENTIAL

Abuse from hapless soldiers. Great for your sense of self-worth

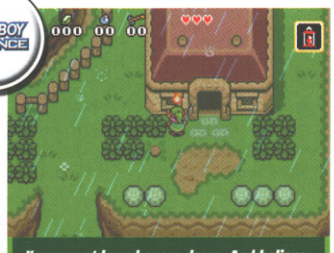
Classic adventure returns in a blaze of glory

Hmm... Now how, do we reckon, is Link supposed to be able to shift these rocks?

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-4
COST: £19.99
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
OUT: MARCH 28
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
URL: WWW.NINTENDO.COM/GAMES/GAMEPAGE/GAMEPAGE_MAIN.JSP?GAMEID=1381

GAME BOY ADVANCE



You cannot burn houses down. And believe us, we made repeated efforts to do so

FANTASTIC FOUR PLAY

While Link To The Past remains the same as the SNES original, Four Swords is a brilliant addition to the package. Offering two- to four-player cooperative action, this mode arguably represents the finest use of the link-up feature. Work in tandem with other players to solve a range of well-thought-out puzzles. And the updated visuals are magic.

Let's all do the conga! Tightly-knit teamwork is essential to success in Four Swords

The Links must work together in order to manoeuvre the platform to safety

Let there be no confusion: this handheld port of the 11-year-old SNES classic is still one of the finest adventure games ever. This pixel-perfect port will win your heart all over again with its massive quest of frequent genius.

But it's newcomers who are in for the real treat, as Link To The Past offers a good 20-30 hours of gaming glory. The dim-witted Princess Zelda has once again been captured by the sinister Ganon. As Link, you must embark on a daring rescue mission to get the girl and, yup, save the world. Yadda, yadda.

OBSESSION FOR MEN

But despite the clichéd premise, you will grow to care about Link's progress in an obsessive way. Even when you're not playing, you'll be dreaming about how to solve the next mind-bending puzzle – exactly the effect a great game should have.

Link's House. No wonder he can't wait to bugger off

The dungeons form much of the puzzle gameplay

It's a shame Nintendo hasn't updated the visuals to match the standard of the Four Swords multiplayer game, but once you become embroiled in the quest, you won't care. It's the exquisitely-designed puzzles and dungeons, the beautifully balanced gameplay, the taxing bosses and ultimate sense of satisfaction that make a mockery of most modern-day adventures.

A timeless classic and a brilliant bonus mode make for one of the finest handheld packages ever. Buy it!

VERDICT

A single-player option in Four Swords would have been nice, but otherwise this is an utterly essential, flawlessly produced title. **Johnny**

GOOD VS BAD

- RPG masterpiece
- Arguably GBA's best game
- Four Swords is cool
- Four Swords multiplayer only
- Main game unchanged

9 OUT OF TEN

KUNG FU CHAOS

This KFC ain't that tasty

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-4
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
OUT: APRIL 11
DEVELOPER: JUST ADD MONSTERS
URL: WWW.XBOX.COM/KUNGFUCHAOS

Shock your enemies into submission with a special pole-dancing move

Take a sprinkling of '70s-style kung fu movies and mix well with a thick slice of Power Stone-style, four-player, manic beat 'em up action and you've got Kung Fu Chaos.

SLAPSTICK ASS-KICKS

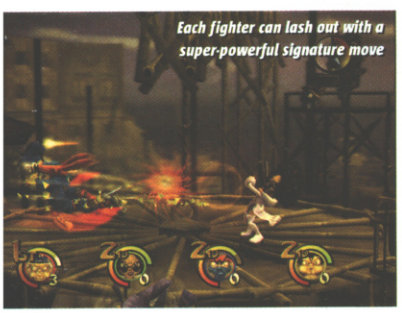
More of a mindless comedy party game than a hardcore fighter, Xbox's exclusive brawler tries to hook you in with its chaotic silliness, fast-paced action and copious single and multiplayer modes. And it succeeds... for a while. The problem being that the action is basic and repetitive, especially when you're fighting against AI computer characters.

ICEBERG! The arenas are based on old kung fu movies and Hollywood blockbusters

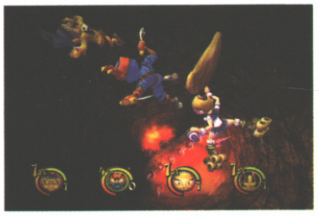
"'Ave it, Grandad!" It's okay to beat up old people in Kung Fu Chaos

It tries to spice things up with a feature that enables you to humiliate your opponents with stupid taunts. The more you take the mick out of your enemies, the more your character powers-up, encouraging you to be as insulting as you are aggressive.

But if you're just after some mindless mayhem with a few mates, Kung Fu Chaos delivers a satisfying punch.



Each fighter can lash out with a super-powerful signature move



Deeper underground: be sure to dodge the spikes as you freefall down this long shaft

VERDICT

Too simple and silly to get true beat 'em up aficionados excited, but the basic bonkers action should tickle the less serious fight fan. **Mike**

GOOD VS BAD

- Funny '70s throwback fighters
- Insult your enemies
- No Xbox Live-enabled multiplayer
- Only six arenas

6 OUT OF TEN

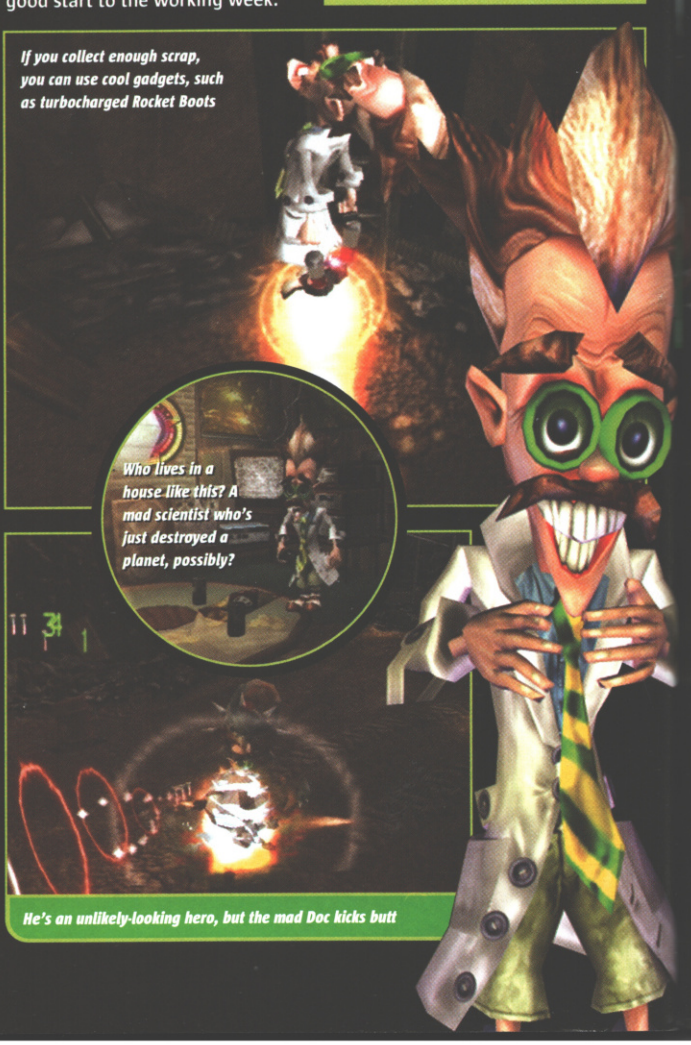
Dr. Muto™

Doc in comedy salvage op

Poor Dr. Muto. He was only trying to help. One minute he's dreaming of solving the energy crisis, the next he's waking up to find that he's accidentally blown Planet Midway to bits, with only his lab surviving the big bang. Not a good start to the working week.

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: MIDWAY GAMES
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: MIDWAY GAMES
URL: WWW.MIDWAY.COM



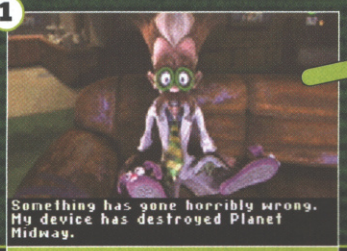
If you collect enough scrap, you can use cool gadgets, such as turbocharged Rocket Boots

Who lives in a house like this? A mad scientist who's just destroyed a planet, possibly?

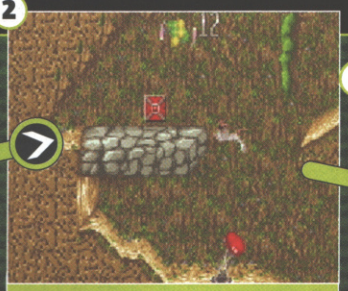
He's an unlikely-looking hero, but the mad Doc kicks butt

MUTO ADVANCE

The GBA version of Dr. Muto sticks very closely to the plot of the console versions, with the same overall objective of constructing the Genitor, collecting Isotopes and harvesting DNA. It features the same annoying enemies, the boss battles and morphing abilities, but it's all been scaled down and simplified to fit into your hand.



There are no cutscenes on GBA, but the animations still convey the crazy humour



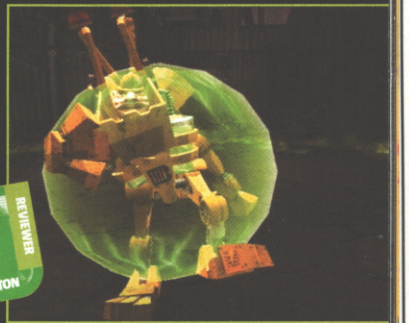
Dr. Muto the mouse gets to scrabble around in dirty drain pipes just for kicks. Takes all sorts

The S.O.B (Sons of Burnital) guards are just as persistent and tough as in the PS2 version

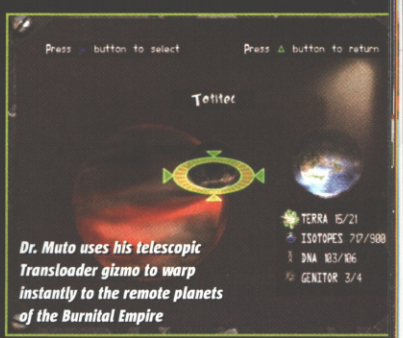
APE ESCAPE (BETTER THAN) / (WORSE THAN) **DR. MUTO** / **SLY RACCOON**

Anxious to make amends for this involuntary Armageddon faux pas, the good doc vows to reconstruct Planet Midway using his titter-worthy Genitor 9000 invention. But first he has to build the pesky machine by salvaging parts from different planets. To survive on each of the Burnital Empire's godforsaken holes, Muto must harvest DNA to fuel his morphs, and collect Isotopes to activate more gizmos as he looks for his Genitor bits.

The cutscenes play out like mini-movies, with added smutty innuendo. Carry On Muto, perhaps?



The boss battles challenge your skills to the max. This is Vinny the Tool Bino



Dr. Muto uses his telescopic Transloader gizmo to warp instantly to the remote planets of the Burnital Empire

NEVER MIND THE GENITORS

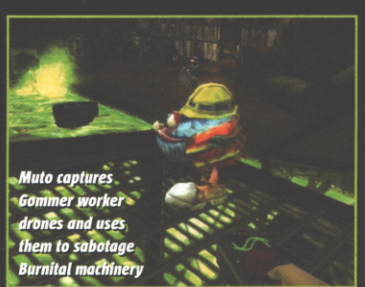
If it's all starting to sound like a formulaic 3D platform game, don't worry. You may have done the running, jumping, swimming and shooting many times before, but this deceptively clever platformer manages to make it all feel fresh.

The creature-morphing is hardly original, but it works. The characters and locations are as crazed and inventive as anything you'll find in a Loony Tunes cartoon, while the actual gameplay is effortless and joyful. The clever save system means you rarely have to backtrack, and yet each planet you visit is huge and divided into several large locations packed with diverse sub-quests.

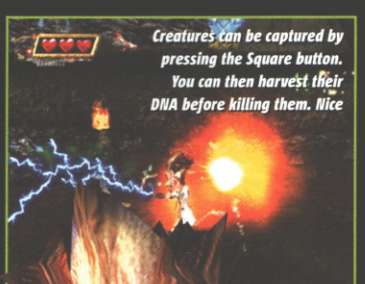
2003 looks like being the year of the platform game, and Dr. Muto will be right up there with the front-runners. And jumpers. CVG

MIGHTY MORPHING MUTO

Harvest enough DNA from alien creatures and you'll be able to activate Dr. Muto's Morphing Formulas. These enable him to transform into brilliantly quirky animated creatures at the press of the Triangle button. Experiencing the levels from the shrunken perspective of the mouse or upside down as the spider adds lashings of variety to the gameplay.

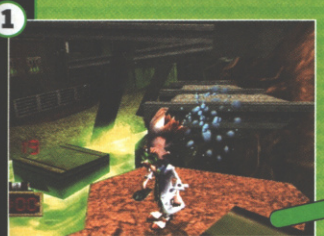


Muto captures Gommer worker drones and uses them to sabotage Burnital machinery



Creatures can be captured by pressing the Square button. You can then harvest their DNA before killing them. Nice

1



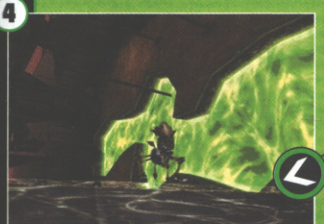
Aah, it's a funny scary critter. Er, sorry, our mistake – this is actually the good doctor in his 'normal' state

When you're a mouse everything looks much bigger than normal. Use the whiplash tail to pulverise giant enemies

2

3

4



The Arachnidoc can crawl across ceilings, shoot goo at enemies, ingest them and spit them out and lay odious egg bombs

Stomping around in Doc Gorilla mode makes you feel really powerful and strong. A lot less agile than the mouse, however

VERDICT

A wonderfully wacky game overflowing with imaginative touches, but also challenging and extremely well constructed. **Maura** CVG

GOOD VS BAD

- Dr. Muto, a genius comic creation
- Al, the Kubrick spoof computer
- Occasionally erratic camera
- Graphics a little washed out

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Ape Escape (PS2) Toe Jam And Earl III: Mission To Earth (Xbox)

STEEL BATTALION

Steely proof that simulations can be enjoyable

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £129.99
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
OUT: MARCH 28
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
URL: WWW.STEEL-BATTALION.COM

Let's be frank: the mere thought of a flight simulation makes CVG go as limp as a limp éclair.

But although Steel Battalion, with its insane 40-button/three-pedalled controller is probably the most anal sim in the history of the genre, it's simulating an experience that any red-blooded male would get off on: piloting a 300-foot assault robot in a mad futuristic war. You might look like a geek playing it, but it'll make you feel like an all-powerful metal god.

Whoa, don't shoot! These chunky metal fellas are on your side

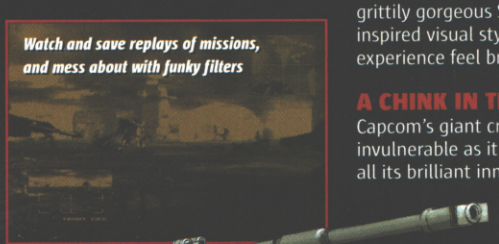
REVIEWER
MIKE COOPER

Your balls will be the last things this enemy ever sees. Poor sucker

LEARNER DRIVER

Unsurprisingly it takes a good few hours before you become comfortable with the controls, but once you start to get to grips with it, it feels fantastic. Stomp confidently through the sea and storm beaches with your robot buddies; tear across narrow bridges while side-stepping barrage missile attacks; crunch cross-country and tactically take out enemy Vertical Tanks, gun emplacements and sneaky hidden ground troops.

The balance of all-out intense action and strategy is spot on. And the grittily gorgeous Saving Private Ryan-inspired visual style makes the whole experience feel brilliantly believable.



Watch and save replays of missions, and mess about with funky filters

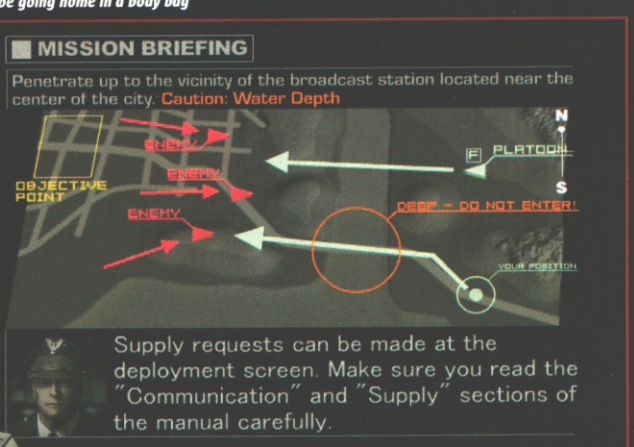
A CHINK IN THE ARMOUR

Capcom's giant creation isn't as invulnerable as it looks, however. For all its brilliant innovation, there are only 12 missions in total. And

Pay attention to your mission briefing or you'll be going home in a body bag

Keep an eye on your radar at all times. You never know who's lurking in the mist

Cutscenes have an old wartime style, even though the game's set in the future



Supply requests can be made at the deployment screen. Make sure you read the "Communication" and "Supply" sections of the manual carefully.

BLIND PANIC

War is a dark and dirty business, and Steel Battalion doesn't shy away from the muck. Dirt flicks up onto your windscreen, raindrops obscure your view and smoke fills the air. These effects stoke the action with menace, grit, realism and tension.

1

You can barely make out your enemy for all the crap on screen and the dark drifting mist

2

Storming forwards while sidestepping shots is the only way to get a clear shot on target

considering you have to fork out 130 smackers for the pleasure of this unique experience, you'd expect more for your money.

That's not to say that it won't take you a long time to complete. It's bloody hard. Furthermore, as we told you in our preview, if you fail to eject before crashing and burning, you lose your save game. But having played it for a few months now, CVG can't help feeling that this gimmick is a cover-up for the lack of levels.

It costs the same price as a GameCube, it'll take over your bedroom, and could make your girlfriend wonder what the hell she's doing with you. But if you do choose to buy Steel Battalion, you'll acquire a piece of videogame history. There's never been a game like it, and there won't be again – until Steel Battalion 2, when you'll have to buy a self-assembly, skyscraper-sized robot peripheral. Start saving the pennies. OK

CVG VERDICT

Steel Battalion is a triumph of innovation and sim-style action. You just need to sell a few less important body parts to science to afford it. **Mike** LW

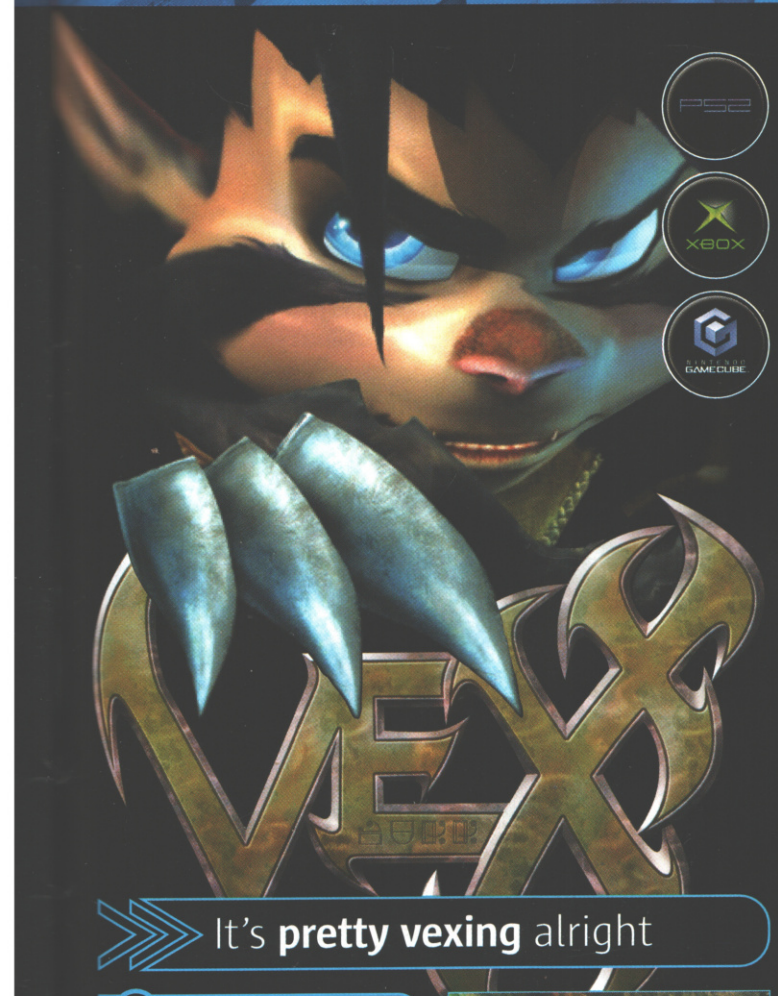
GOOD VS BAD

- 40-button controller!
- Heaps of action, strategy and style
- A collector's item

- Jumbo price tag
- No online compatibility
- Only 12 missions

8
OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Mech Assault (Xbox) Zone Of The Enders: The 2nd Runner (PS2)



It's **pretty vexing** alright

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **1**
COST: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM**
OUT: **NOW**
DEVELOPER: **ACCLAIM**
URL: **WWW.VEXXTHEGAME.COM**

If you force-fed Mario dangerous steroids and exposed him to some sort of space radiation, you would probably end up with both a main character and a videogame a lot like Vexx.

Using almost every idea seen in Super Mario 64, but with vast environments, proper hardcore enemy-mashing and level challenges that require seemingly superhuman gaming prowess, this is one hero who is certainly hellbent on making an explosive debut.

The levels in Vexx are wide and high and the sense of scale is mighty impressive

The Wraith Hearts shimmer from their perches, mocking your attempts to nab 'em

TAKEN TO ANOTHER LEVEL

You know the score: each massive level, accessed from a central hub, has a number of individual challenges where the ultimate goal is to collect each Wraith Hearts (Vexx's equivalent to Mario's stars, Jak And Daxter's power cells or Haven's cogs). It's as traditional as it could be, yet manages to be as compelling as any other decent, recent platformer. This is thanks largely to the devious level design, merging many familiar ideas into enormously taxing obstacle courses, and forcing you to work really hard at nabbing each wraith heart.

The graphics are mostly excellent too and the whole experience, though in no way original, is a fantastic example of how to repackage and rework all of the platform game clichés for a brand-new generation of consoles and console players.

THE TOUGHEST NUT

Like a jolly-looking clown who's hiding a machete up his comedy sleeves, Vexx's cartoon colours might fool you. This is one of the most excruciatingly difficult platform games you're likely to play in a long time. Even the earliest level challenges are like hitting a brick wall until your head gets all pulpy. Here's what you can expect just a few minutes into your first set of challenges.

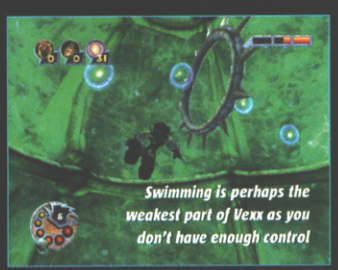
1 *Enter the cave behind the waterfall and the floor crumbles beneath Vexx*

2 *A lethal ice blast reveals these platforms*

3 *You've come a long way but there's more in store*

4 *Deadly ice blasts lie in the path of your goal*

There's loads of satisfying meaty scrapping with the plentiful enemies in the game



Swimming is perhaps the weakest part of Vexx as you don't have enough control

The lush Neverglades are full of ancient ruins and hidden surprises

Muck about with the sundial and you notice the sun and moon rise and fall...

...and at a certain time of day the warp portal on the right magically opens!

VERDICT

A huge game that's as challenging as it is enjoyable – and that's a hell of a lot. Just don't go expecting any new gameplay revelations. **Lee**

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Super Mario Sunshine (GC), Dr Muto (Xbox, PS2, GC)

GOOD VS BAD

- Addictively challenging
- Fighting is vicious
- Huge adventure

- Can be frustrating
- Too few new ideas
- Will be too tough for some

8 OUT OF TEN

The Mark of Kri™

This is what the world looks like from Kuzo view – that's Rau down there

Mark our words, this one's a lot more violent than it looks...

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1

COST: £39.99

PUBLISHER: SONY

OUT: MARCH 21

DEVELOPER: SONY

URL: WWW.PLAYSTATION.COM

CVG readers, allow us to introduce Rau. Now, don't judge Rau by his looks. Yes, we know he looks like the proverbial brick privy. We know he's drawn like a dim sidekick in a second-rate Disney flick.

But Rau has hidden depths. If you want stealth, grace and agility, he's your man. He hardly dribbles at all, and he's the star of a rather unusual fighting game.

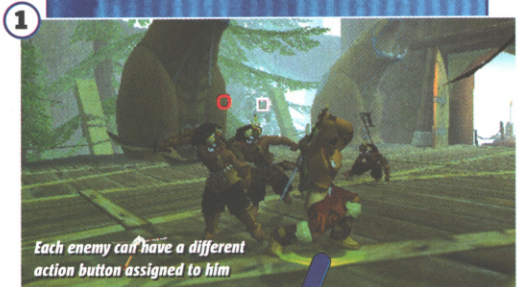
The Mark Of Kri is all about Rau's battle to save the world, but what makes it different from your average beat 'em up is the way fights are conducted (see Bo Selecta box). Being able to attack any enemy without facing them means you can look forward to fighting whole crowds. It also means the camera can do what it likes without worrying about making it easy to control Rau, so battles can look pretty spectacular. It's all about the gore and the battle frenzy – no girly spells for our Rau!

Don't lose your head! What do you mean, you've heard that one before?

BO SELECTA

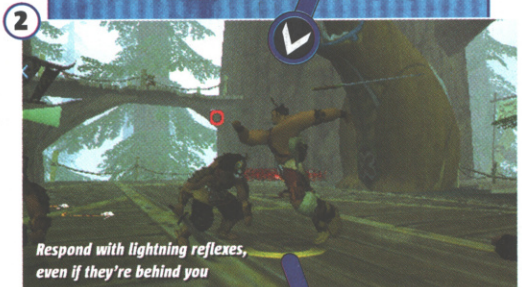
The way you select your enemies is by sweeping the right analog stick round. Then, as soon as your fiery beam of consciousness descends upon them, they're assigned a button. Whack it and you'll whack them in turn. Which essentially means that taking on three enemies at a time is easy as pie for Rau – and later in the game, he'll be able to hurt a whole lot more, too.

1



Each enemy can have a different action button assigned to him

2



Respond with lightning reflexes, even if they're behind you

3

You can pull off wicked combos – if you're quick enough

Don't come between a man and his birdie buddy

Kuzo can only fly to one of these glowing beacons

WE ARE THE KNIGHTS OF KRI, WE ARE!

When he's not fighting, Rau also enjoys a bit of sneaky stealth. You're gifted with a spirit bird guide called Kuzo. Unfortunately, guiding your birdie around becomes a bit repetitive after a while, and you'll get the hang of the stealth missions pretty quickly too.

Essentially, Kuzo is a camera that can only be placed in certain locations, so all you do is wait for the guards to turn their backs then jump in and smack them up. Somehow, sneaking up on a load of criminals gathered round a camp-fire isn't as exciting as, say, infiltrating a top-secret nuclear weapons factory.

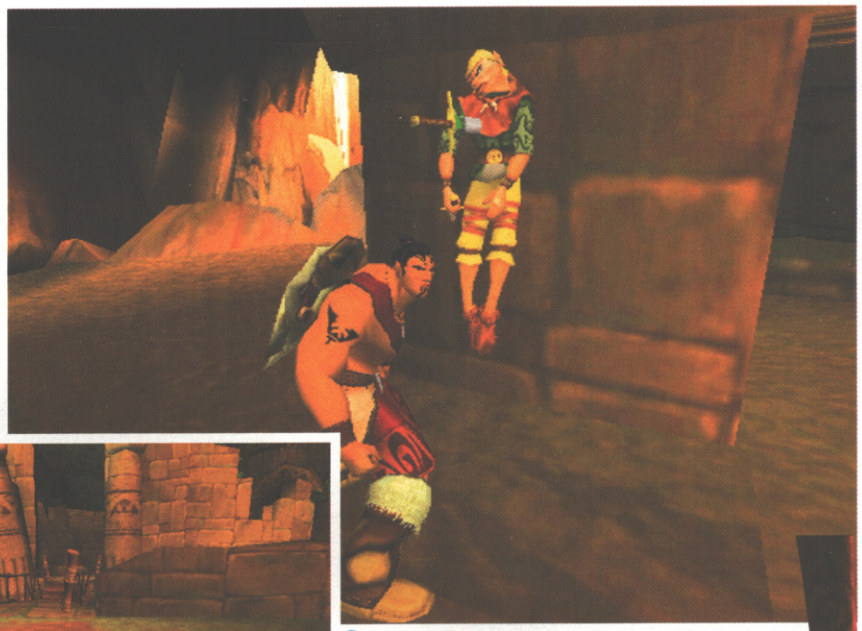
Rau has a number of gory and extreme ways with which to dispatch his foes – our favourite is the one where he grabs them by the scruff of the neck and smashes their heads into the nearest wall, but there's

The graphics certainly have a Maori-like look about them

While you fight, Kuzo flaps around. Easy job, being a bird

Careful you don't slip up there, barbarian boy, or you'll pay

That sword only goes back in when it's covered in blood and/or guts



Not the nicest way to meet your maker. Still, you can't always be choosy in this life

something here for everyone. While there's lots of gore, The Mark Of Kri follows in the footsteps of games like Grand Theft Auto III by remaining fairly cartoon-like. Some of the sound effects are gruesome enough, though. Try skewering a hapless guard with your sword and you'll see what we mean.

HAWAII FIGHT-O

Rau's world is a sort of 'Far East/South Pacific' version of your traditional fantasy setting. Ancient temples filled with giant baby sculptures give things a bit of a Thai feel, and Rau and his people look rather Maori-like. It's a brave and welcome change from all those knights and Vikings... but it doesn't really have much impact on the way you play.

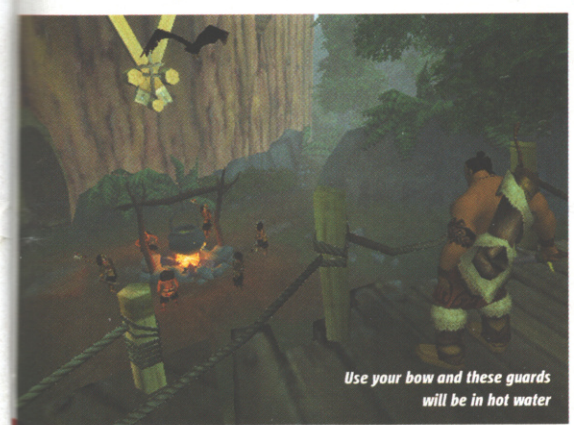
Extras include arena challenges, during which you tussle with a set number of foes, and new costumes for Rau to wear. Beating the arena challenges will also unlock new goodies like cheats, and there are always in-game battle challenges to help you hone you skills.

This man was in need of a second smile. So Rau, generous soul, gave it to him

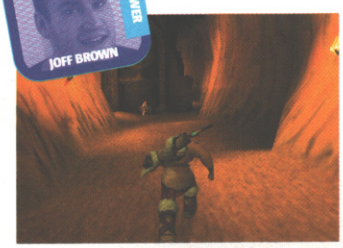
Enemies are well-animated, but there aren't that many variations per level. And don't expect many supernatural powers or creatures either. Rau doesn't use magic, and there are no giant boss characters or massive demons to slay here.

At heart, The Mark Of Kri is just a superior scrolling beat 'em up. There's nothing wrong with that of course, but it does mean that once you've mastered the art of full-on fighting and stealth kills, you're left with little else to do.

An adventure game that employed the same engine and characters would have *really* been something, but this is essentially a polished and satisfying slugger. OW



Use your bow and these guards will be in hot water



REVIEWER
JOFF BROWN

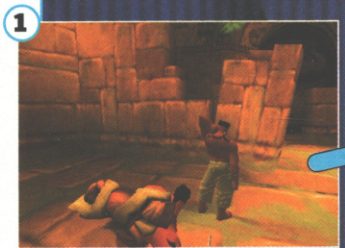
Cavernous, er, caverns are abundant in the game. As are 'baby' statues, oddly enough

Do a slamming special move and enemies will hastily back off in fear. And rightly so

MAORI GEAR SOLID

Use your faithful feathered spirit guide Kuzo's skills to spy out your enemies, then sneak up and take them down without anyone hearing. Because ripping someone's head doesn't make much noise at all, right? Hmmm...

1

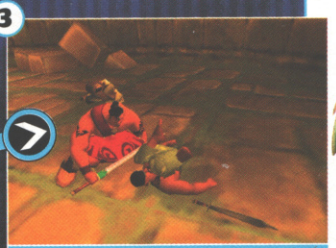


Spot your victim and creep up, sword drawn

2

Kick him to the floor and get ready to strike

3



Yes, that sword's going through his noggin!

VERDICT

Sumptuous visuals, pick-up-and-play action and not much else make The Mark Of Kri a top rental, but it's not really a long-term treat. **Joff** OW

GOOD VS BAD

- Innovative combat system
- Tropical graphics
- Excitingly violent

- Kill enemies. Repeat till bored
- Could be a little lengthier

IF YOU LIKE THIS, TRY THESE... Primal (PS2), Sly Raccoon (PS2)

7 OUT OF TEN

UNREAL II: THE AWAKENING

The **space-noir classic** gets its sequel

Luckily this marine is on your side. But you shouldn't push it

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **1**

COST: **£34.99**

PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**

OUT: **NOW**

DEVELOPER: **LEGEND ENTERTAINMENT**

URL: WWW.UNREAL2.COM

It's pitch black. Throat dry, heart a few beats away from explosion point, sweat snaking stickily down your spine, you creep bug-eyed along desolate corridors. The stench is obscene.

Suddenly, out of the velvet darkness, a screeching, mewling monstrosity springs forth. You fire wildly, something hits, something rips, alien blood and guts splatters across your face. It burns, but you're still alive. Welcome to Unreal II.

NAPALM SPRINKLES

Unreal was a classic first-person shooter that, along with Half-Life, helped define the genre. The sequel may be less innovative than fans might have hoped, and needs a behemoth of a computer to run properly, but still soundly delivers on all FPS essentials.

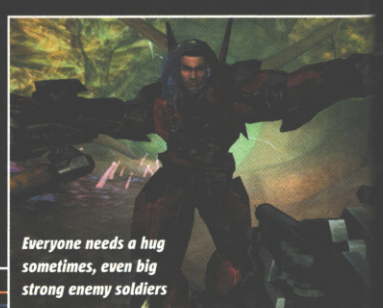
Toasting spidery critters to a crisp does wonders for an arachnophobe's complex

Aida is telling you vital information, but you can't stop thinking about snakes and ladders

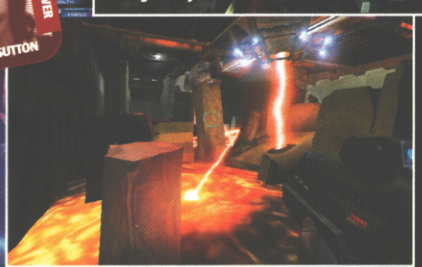
The weapons are awesome and include a flame-thrower with added Napalm garnish and a handy-dandy skull-popping Magum .50. Enemy AI is cranked up to insane levels, while the interaction with the raggedy-ass crew fizzes with dry wit.

You play the part of John Dalton, a maverick enforcer quelling disorder throughout the anarchic galaxy. At times the tension and horror is reminiscent of classic space thriller System Shock 2. These quiet, dread moments in bleak, corpse-ridden corridors are where Unreal II excels.

At other times, though, when surrounded by enemies on vast open landscapes you realise that interlopers such as Halo handle such scenarios with more panache and power.



Everyone needs a hug sometimes, even big strong enemy soldiers



There are even some platform elements thrown into the first-person shooter mix

PC CD ROM

REVIEWER MAURA SUTTON

His may be bigger, but yours is faster. Eat lead, sucka

MISSIONS TO MARS

A major improvement from the first game is the meaty storyline revolving around rivalries between huge interplanetary corporations, warring alien factions and cold-blooded mercenaries. At the centre of the chaos are seven mysterious Artefacts, which John and his crewmates Aida, Isaak and Ne'Bar must snatch before anyone else.

1

This chunky green charmer is guarding the Artefact on planet Sanctuary. Help

2

Name a planet 'Hell' and you're just asking for trouble. But what caused it?

3

An earth-like planet, where your mission is an all-out assault to rescue trapped marines

CVG VERDICT

With Halo 2 and Doom 3 looming, Unreal II is in danger of being overshadowed, but it's still a cracking alien-fragging orgy of carnage. **Maura**

GOOD VS BAD

- Staggering visuals
- Atmospheric sound effects
- Sci-fi humour

- Needs a big PC
- Tough boss battles
- Stealth missions aren't stealthy

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
- Unreal Tournament 2003 (PC)
- No One Lives Forever 2 (PC)

PANZER DRAGOON ORTA

Turbulence, tension and heaps of fun

REVIEWER: MIKE COOPER

Jimmy Hill makes a guest appearance as one of the mighty dragons

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **1**

COST: **£39.99**

PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**

OUT: **MARCH 21**

DEVELOPER: **SMILEBIT**

URL: **WWW.PANZER-DRAGOON.COM**

The best shoot 'em ups make you feel like you're walking a tightrope across a crocodile pit during a hurricane. Every ounce of your energy focused on fighting to stay alive, nerves frazzled and brain fizzing with the sheer intensity.

Traditionally, 2D top-down and side-scrolling blasters like Contra, Radiant Silvergun and Gradius are the masters of making us sweat buckets. Now Panzer Dragoon Orta on Xbox is joining this exclusive club of arcade thrillers, with hardcore 3D action that'll twist your melon and stretch your shooting skills to their limits.

TEN BIRDS WITH ONE STONE

Orta's gameplay isn't conventional. It's every bit as mental as its 2D cousins, the screen rammed with nosebleed levels of activity. But there's hardly any of the regular frenzied bullet dodging.

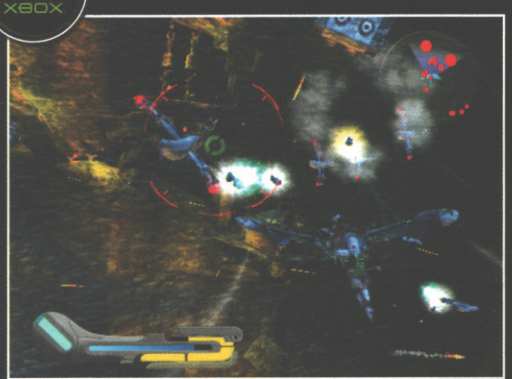
Instead, this 3D beauty immerses you in a nutty experience that feels similar to the action in Sega's awesome techno blaster Rez. The main focus is on annihilating incoming projectiles and enemies rather than simply dodging them, and you can aim and lock onto tons of targets before releasing a single devastating attack.

Also like Rez, this dragon-riding dynamo is on rails. However, it has a couple of tricks up its scaly sleeves that help make the action feel freeform, fresh, and extra tough.

Unlike other on-rails 3D arcade-style shooters like Lylat Wars on N64, where your only worry is what's coming straight at you, in Orta you're forced to deal with oncoming threats from all sides. Therefore, although your dragon is always travelling in one direction, you need to constantly switch viewpoints. Pressing the left or right shoulder buttons lets you fend off attacks from side; hit both together to swing round 180°.

This unique feature makes the action feel super-tense because you're always under threat from creatures you can't see. But the one annoying aspect of this multi-directional gameplay is the way you can spend ages fighting monsters on your flanks and behind you, only then to slam into an obstacle because you have lost all clue as to where you're going. Bit of a Catch 22 situation.

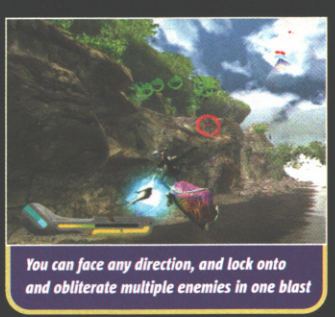
The Glide Wing is by far the fastest and most agile dragon



When your radar suddenly looks like it's contracted chickenpox you know you're in serious trouble

When your Beserk Gauge is full you can release an insanely powerful special attack

The end-of-level boss encounters are hard as hell, and they can last for ages



You can face any direction, and lock onto and obliterate multiple enemies in one blast

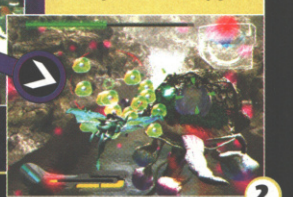
POWER IS NOTHING WITHOUT CONTROL

By speeding up or slowing down while pushing left or right on the analog stick you can manoeuvre yourself around certain boss characters, meaning that the monumental end-of-level battles feel less on-rails than the rest of the game. You're in total control and must explore your enemy from every angle in order to locate and exploit its weak spots.

1

Aha, here's one! But he's not going to let you touch his tender parts without a fight

Arrows on your radar mean you can move freely and start hunting for the boss's soft bits



2

PICK A DRAGON, ANY DRAGON

Along with the worry of which direction you need to face, you're also faced with the dilemma of which sort of dragon to use.

Your winged beast can transform into any of three different forms – Base, Heavy and Glide Wing – each suited to specific battle scenarios, adding a tactical element to the aerial adventure. Plus, as you progress through the 10 astounding stages, each dragon gradually evolves and powers up, giving them new abilities and more powerful attacks.

But choosing which way you need to be looking and which dragon to fight with is as complicated as it gets. Which is fortunate, as Orta never gives you much time to think. There's always too much action kicking off in every direction. Just how we like it.

VERDICT

There are only ten stages, but they're damn tough. 3D shoot 'em ups don't come much more frantic, fresh and fantastic-looking. **Mike**

GOOD VS BAD

- Total chaos
- Amazing enemies
- Prettiest shoot 'em up ever?

- You'll often bump into things
- Crack the patterns and it's all over

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THIS... ■ *Contra: Shattered Soldier (PS2)*

8 OUT OF TEN

Kirby NIGHTMARE IN DREAMLAND

He sucks but how's his game?

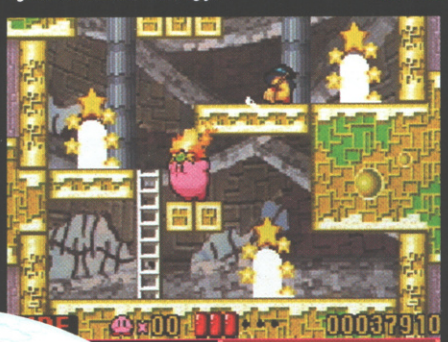
GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-4
COST: £29.99
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
OUT: APRIL
DEVELOPER: HAL LABS
URL: WWW.KIRBYKIRBYKIRBY.COM

Underneath that chirpy pink façade, Kirby is suffering a world of hurt. King DeDeDe has stolen the Star Rod and broken it into five pieces, robbing the inhabitants of Dream Land of their dream sleep. The fiend.

Worse still, DeDeDe has been frolicking in the sacred Fountain of Dreams, his mucky skin flakes clogging up the water and leaving an unsightly scummy ring. Only Kirby and his giant inhaling gob can stop the King and his minions and repair the Star Rod.

Grapes of wrath: Kirby wages a just war against the bandana-wearing fruit



Lighting farts has always been a dangerous passion for big K

REVIEWER
MAURA SUTTON

BLOB VS BOSS

Kirby boss battles are always something special, and the numerous bouts in Nightmare In Dreamland live up to the legend. Learning the enemy patterns of attack and using Kirby's sucking and floating skills to outwit them makes a pleasant change from platform hopping.

1

In the Boss Battle Arena Kirby can revisit old friends like Mr Freeze and his iced buns

2

Kirby can suck in the Poppy Bros. bombs and hurl them back. Clever

3

Beat the end-of-level bosses to rescue a piece of the broken Star Rod

SUCK IT AND SEE

The premise is simple, as is the gameplay. Kirby bumps and balloons his way around a revamp of the legendary NES game Kirby's Adventure. His main skill is opening his massive trap, sucking up enemies and either spitting them out or crouching down to copy their special abilities.

Even if you get tired of endlessly bouncing through levels, you still get a tingle of excitement when the big K transforms into yet another fabulous costume and unleashes a new attack. And while the gameplay may be virtually identical to the original's, the GBA game's lush new backgrounds and cute character animations are a dazzling improvement.

At the museum see which moves you can copy

However, it's questionable whether good looks and a loveable personality are enough to re-invigorate the Kult of Kirby – has the bloater passed his sell-by date? While the mini-games are a laugh and the four-player cooperative mode a brave attempt at something different, the Great Pink One seems to lack the long term gameplaying appeal of Mario, Yoshi, Pikachu and pals. OM

Kirby is bald yet he has a ponytail. Strange

VERDICT

Nostalgia freaks will love seeing yet another NES classic on the GBA, but although Kirby's still cute, the repetition grates after a while. **Maura** OM

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3 (GBA) Spyro 2 (GBA)

GOOD VS BAD

Good:
- Fun mini-games
- Groovy bosses
- Beautifully refurbished levels

Bad:
- Not challenging enough
- Repetitive play
- Encourages gobbing

7 OUT OF TEN

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD III

Make zombie paste

You can judge the extent of the arcade's demise by Sega's choosing to release the third instalment of its popular zombie blaster on the Xbox, bypassing the arcades altogether.

The arcade's loss is the Xbox's gain, as House Of The Dead III is a fun blaster that remains true to the spirit of the series, right up until the final boss. Everything you'd expect from a zombie blaster is here, with plenty of exploding guts, technicians to save, bonuses to find and paths to choose.

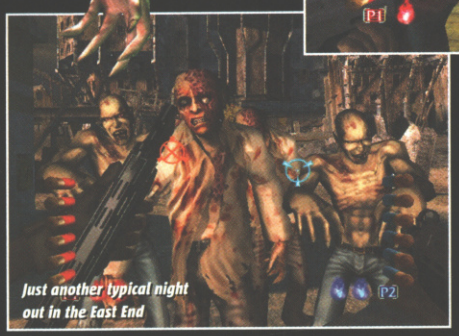
However, one vital part of the gameplay has been tampered with. You no longer have to shoot outside the screen to reload! Yep, an intrinsic ingredient of the gun game has gone: Dead III features automatic reloads – we're flummoxed as to why.

Still, any sequel that gives you its predecessor as an unlockable extra can't be all that bad and if you're considering buying this, make sure you get hold of the compatible Thrusmaster Beretta lightgun. You know it makes sense. CVG

Save the humans before they become more zombie snacks

The Village People reunion wasn't a roaring success

Quick, shoot these hideous bloaters before they reach Inch Loss Island



Just another typical night out in the East End

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
OUT: MARCH 14
DEVELOPER: SEGA/WOW ENTERTAINMENT
URL: WWW.INFOGRAMES.CO.UK

CVG VERDICT

A frantic, knee-deep-in-guts zombie blaster that's fun to play but doesn't quite manage to reach the heights of its forerunners. **Alex H** CVG

GOOD VS BAD
- Frantic action
- Good variety of zombies
- House Of The Dead 2 is included
- Automatic reloads
- Lack of longevity

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
- Time Crisis 2 (PS2)
- Vampire Night (PS2)

7 OUT OF TEN

JURASSIC PARK™ OPERATION GENESIS

Life finds a way... again

Here's your chance to prove that not all dino parks have to go belly-up in disaster. Getting one up on the JP movies, here you build a Jurassic Park where the visitors *don't* have to fight for survival within minutes of arriving.

Operation Genesis lets you construct your own park and create your own dinosaurs in a fun and surprisingly scientific way. Take dino breeding: first you have to excavate fossils and find DNA in order to start breeding. There are 25 different dinos to grow and 35 different buildings to erect.

Of course, bad planning on your behalf will lead to dinosaur rampages and some pretty peeved visitors. If this happens, take to the skies in a handy chopper and hunt down the runaways. In addition there's a variety of involving and absorbing missions that allow you to temporarily forget about the building and focus on some action.

If you loved the movies or are a fan of dinosaurs, this is a cool little title and worth a look. CVG

What have they got in there, King Kong?

Hunt down those pesky carnivores

You can take photos of the scaly critters - just like Pokémon Snap. Improvement on the average holiday snap

You'll soon get sick of seeing that distinctive black-and-red logo

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £34.99
PUBLISHER: VIVENDI
OUT: MARCH 21
DEVELOPER: UNIVERSAL/BLUE TONGUE
URL: WWW.JPTHEGAME.COM

CVG VERDICT

Probably the best use of the Jurassic Park licence to date, Operation Genesis is fun while it lasts but looks and feels a little clunky. **Alex H** CVG

GOOD VS BAD
- Cool-looking dinos
- Plenty of action
- Feels connected to the movies
- Some poor pop-up
- Temperamental frame rate
- Needs more missions

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
- Rollercoaster Tycoon 2 (PC)
- The Sims (PC/PS2)

7 OUT OF TEN

METROID PRIME

The **sexiest** sci-fi thriller **since Halo**

Certain electric enemies use interference to obscure your view

Use your Thermal Visor to see invisible enemies that may be present

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **1**

COST: **£39.99**

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**

OUT: **MARCH 21**

DEVELOPER: **RETRO STUDIOS**

URL: **WWW.METROID.COM**

Your Wave Beam fires three bolts of energy and can be charged up to gain homing capabilities

Lara's got 'em and the DOA girls can barely walk because of the size of theirs. It seems that hefty digital D-cups are the only way to female fame in the gaming world.

So what chance does Metroid Prime's flat-chested metal-headed heroine Samus Aran have of stealing our hearts? Lots! She's about as arousing as having your goolies snared in a bear trap, but Samus can do things and take you to places that no other woman can! And you'll love her for it too.

For starters, she's dressed to kill. Literally. Samus's various unlockable suits equip her with tons of deadly futuristic weapons and also enable her to perform spectacular acrobatic manoeuvres. And boy, is she flexible. She can curl up into a wee ball like one of those freaky rubber-boned circus performers to access pipes and the tightest of crannies. Phwoar!

And what other lady will take you on a gripping journey into the heart of some of the most astounding sci-fi environments ever to appear in a videogame, and bring you face to face with the grizzliest critters in the universe? Sure as hell Lara won't.

Pay attention to the colour of your enemy as this will often determine which sorts of attack they are especially vulnerable to

TAKE IT ON THE CHIN

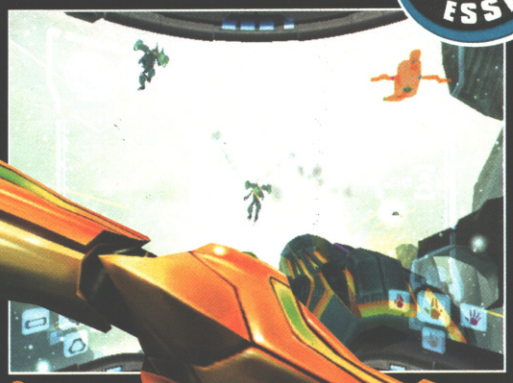
You'll spend your first half-hour in Prime's mammoth universe constantly picking your jaw up off the floor.

The labyrinthine opening level is rammed with stunning scenery, awesome weather and special effects, and it oozes atmosphere from every pore. Frightening encounters with space pirates, a dazzling boss battle and a manic escape sequence tie the whole opening section together. But from early on Prime makes it clear that nothing is as simple or predictable.

Hardcore sci-fi action, extravagantly tough puzzles and constant surprises are about the only things you can be sure to expect. And the further you progress through the game, the truer this becomes.

Nintendo's otherworldly masterpiece is one of the few games CVG has played in yonks that succeeds in keeping its momentum throughout the 20 hours it should take to clock the adventure. It's constantly throwing you into ever more outrageous

ESSENTIAL CVG ESSENTIAL



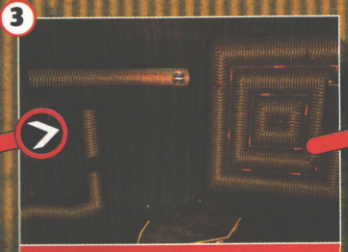
You can only track one enemy at a time. Phooey!

STICKY BALLS

Prime's unique puzzles become progressively bigger, bolder and more intimidating the further you venture into Cube's exclusive enormous quest. You're bound to be bowled over by the sheer scale of its brainteasers, especially the puzzles that require you to transform into the Morph and sticky Spider Ball.

Scope out the magnetic puzzle maze

Then switch to Spider Ball form...



...and hold R to trigger your in-built magnet

You need to be skillful as well as smart

scenarios, colossal battles and gargantuan landscapes.

BREAKING WITH TRADITION

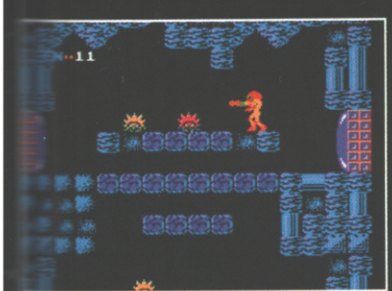
It's mostly played in first person – except for when you transform into the Morph or Spider Balls – but Prime isn't a traditional first-person blaster. That's what's so exciting. The quest stays true to the gameplay style and spirit of its SNES predecessor, but is reworked with spectacular 3D panache.

It's not an all-out frenzied shooter, but rather an intricate action adventure that forces you to use brain and brawn in equal measures. You must closely examine your surroundings for clues to accessing new areas, solve Zelda-like brainteasers and locate and unlock tons of crucial power-ups, such as the Power, Wave, Ice and Plasma Beams.

Unlock the Grapple Beam to become the king of the swingers

Toast enemies with the Plasma Beam, the most powerful weapon in your arsenal

You don't need to be a genius to see that fire beats ice. Frazzle the freak with your Plasma Beam!


Complete Fusion on GBA and hook it up to your Cube to unlock the original NES game

Go swimming in a bubbling sea of scrumptious bolognese sauce. Yummy

It's essential you use Samus's various special suits and unique Combat, X-ray, Thermal, and Scan Visors, because the hundreds of enemy species are designed so that they're only vulnerable to certain attacks, and can only be seen and tracked when you're using a specific visor. This adds a fat dose of strategy to the way you play, because you're often surrounded by groups of aliens that each need to be fought and destroyed using different tactics, forcing you to act and think super-quick.

OCARINA OF PRIME

It's when you're locked in one of these insane conflicts, however, that Prime's only real flaw bubbles to the surface: the controls. If anything, it feels like it's using the Ocarina Of Time control system but in first person.

Zelda might work in third person but Prime's controls often leave you feeling frustrated, because you can only lock onto a single enemy at a time by holding down the left trigger. Nor can you strafe around corners, leaving you open to blindside attacks, and making negotiating tough landscapes awkward.

Although the gameplay isn't like a conventional Quake-style blaster, a control set-up like Halo's would have made Prime a near perfect first-person adventure.

Space Pirates! Not a peg leg, parrot or bandana in sight, though

Shoot the alien and he'll turn into a platform, protecting you from the sauce

The terrifying spidery boss has serious issues

REVIEWER
MIKE COOPER

VERDICT

Warning! This exclusive sci-fi epic's mind-melting action and puzzles may sizzle your brain. But the tricky controls could put some off. **Mike**

IF YOU LIKE THIS, TRY THESE...
- Timesplitters 2 (GC)
- Metroid Fusion (GBA)

GOOD VS BAD

- Rich environments
- Cool giant puzzles
- The best-looking visuals on Cube

- Controls are sometimes awkward

9 OUT OF TEN

LOG ON AND LOAD UP

Still hungry for more even after thumbing through this game-packed issue of CVG? Logging onto **ComputerAndVideogames.com** will satisfy the biggest gaming appetites

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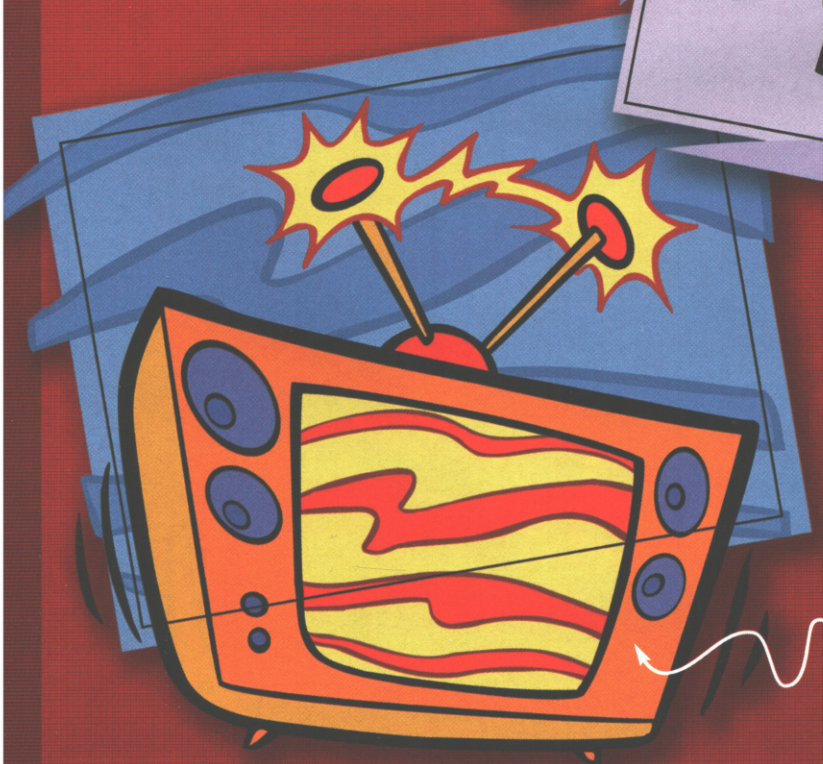

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METHOD MAN VERSUS DMX VERSUS REDMAN VERSUS LUDACRIS GOOD GOD, THIS COULD BE THE MOTHER [CENSORED] BOMB!

Contents subject to change without prior notice

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Join us on a tour of the English-language versions of this must-have game, worth owning a GBA for

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We delve deeper into the seedy world of BYW

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Everything you need to know about the game that promises to be as radical as its movie counterparts

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A game you grow to love so much that it would wake you from a coma... you know, if ever... erm

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CVG

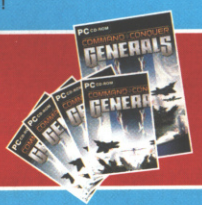
Yes! More

Inspired by Dr. Muto's crazed scientific shenanigans, we ran this month's Trailblazer prizes through a room-sized mass spectrometer to analyse just how much collective fun there is between them all. The hi-tech doodah couldn't handle the load though and exploded, showering us all with pure, undiluted joy. It wasn't a pretty scene, and the videotape of us all writhing around on the floor is scarier than the tape in film The Ring that kills you dead in seven days. Definitely not one to show your gran. So if you want to feel a fraction of the near-orgasmic joy you can only get from such a bumper pack of awesome gaming gear, sharpen your pens and enter our competition!

START HERE

8th

COMMAND & CONQUER GENERALS



5 TO WIN COURTESY OF EA

Defend the world from terrorists, or dominate the globe with your evil regime in this classic stategy game

In the British Army, who would outrank a general?

■ A. Buckle polisher ■ B. Sunday driver ■ C. Washer-upper ■ D. Field Marshall

7th

THE SIMS

10 TO WIN COURTESY OF EA

The World's Most Popular Game™ is now ready to rock your Xbox and 'Cube

What is the name of the PC Sims add-on that lets you get all romantic?

■ A. Sims Strip Poker ■ B. Sims Hot Date ■ C. Sim's Gettin' Jiggy ■ D. Sims On Heat

6th

IGI 2: COVERT STRIKE & CHRIS RYAN NOVEL

5 TO WIN COURTESY OF CODEMASTERS

IGI 2 is the stealthiest game on the PC and it's authentic too – they got Chris Ryan to be military consultant

What is the name of the agent you play in IGI 2?

■ A. Bones ■ B. Phones ■ C. Moans ■ D. Jones

5th

VEXX

5 TO WIN COURTESY OF ACCLAIM

A lot like Super Mario on steroids, Vexx is a toughie but also a goodie. Get your free Xbox copy right now

What is your reward for completing a level challenge in Vexx?

■ A. Wraith Heart ■ B. Pig Liver ■ C. Dog Spleen ■ D. Bull Pizzle

4th

PRIDE FC

5 TO WIN COURTESY OF THQ

Step aside WWE, forget your UFC – Pride is the newest no-holds-barred brawler on the block

What is the correct name for a group of lions?

■ A. Herd ■ B. Gaggle ■ C. Pack ■ D. Pride

3rd

DR. MUTO

10 TO WIN COURTESY OF MIDWAY

With his lust for all things bestial, Dr. Muto is the maddest game hero in a long while

Which 'animal' does Dr. Muto NOT morph into in his game?

■ A. Gerbil ■ B. Spider ■ C. Doc-Cockeral ■ D. Fish

2nd

PS2 & DR. MUTO

1 TO WIN COURTESY OF MIDWAY

If you win this, beware – it's surely suicide to let maniacal Muto near your new PS2

What was the name of the first successfully cloned sheep?

■ A. Polly ■ B. Dolly ■ C. Wally ■ D. Bob

Trailblazer!

red-hot prizes to be won!

FINISH HERE

1st

NICKELODEON NINTENDO BLOWOUT!

Get in touch with your inner kiddie and enter our competition to win with THQ and Nickelodeon! One lucky CVG reader is going to win a GameCube console, a copy of SpongeBob Squarepants: Revenge Of The Flying Dutchman, Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius and Rugrats Royal Ransom. And that's not all! The same winner will receive a Game Boy Advance and copies of The Wild Thornberrys: The Movie and Jimmy Neutron Vs Jimmy Negatron. It's the happiest prize we've ever given away – get smiling.

What sort of sponge is SpongeBob?

- A. Victoria sponge
- B. Sea sponge
- C. Bath sponge
- D. Freshwater sponge

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But you can prove us wrong and here's how it works. First of all you need to answer all the questions printed below correctly. Over the past six months we've had lots of answered questions, but with the wrong answers. This is not good. Reply to the questions with the *right* answers, okay!

Next, if you are among the first entries out of the bag, and you have all the correct answers, you will be invited to CVG Headquarters in Old London Town. Here you must join five other contenders, chosen from the five previous issues of CVG, for a session of rapid-fire questions.

While you're answering these, we'll also be testing your physical abilities as a gamer. Only the strongest will survive, but whoever this is will truly be Britain's Brainiest Gamer and worthy above all others of the colossal prize. Good luck!

Send your answers to:
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Computer And Video Games, Dennis Publishing
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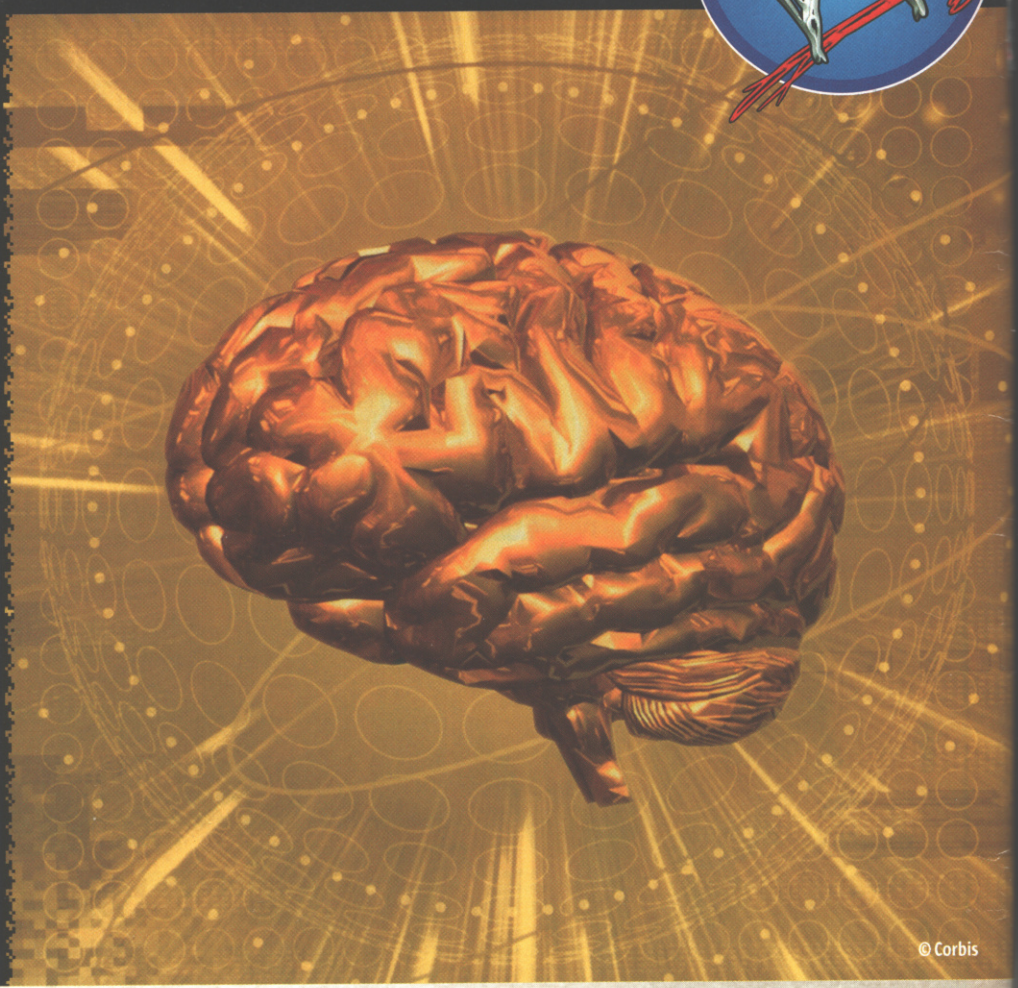
Closing date for this issue is 9 April 2003



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BRITAIN'S BRAINIEST GAMER! FINAL PART

EASY

1. What is Microsoft's new online Xbox service called? .....

2. Which company invented PlayStation? .....

3. Which company invented the Game Boy Advance? .....

4. Who plays Lara Croft in the movie version of Tomb Raider? .....

5. Which rock group features on the soundtrack to the PS2 game Primal? .....

MEDIUM

6. Which company introduced Space Invaders? .....

7. Which Jackass celebrity now makes a regular appearance in the Tony Hawk's Pro Skater games? .....

8. What do the initials 'GT' stand for in the game GT Concept? .....

9. Who stars in the movie Ecks Vs Sever? .....

10. How many years has Computer And Video Games been going? .....

HARD

11. Name the four ghosts in Pac-Man .....

12. Who invented Pac-Man? (The guy, not the company) .....

13. What type of game does Capcom call Devil May Cry? .....

14. Name Sega's network system for Virtua Fighter 4 in Japan .....

15. Who is this little dinosaur? .....

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Breath of Fire
Broken Sword
Doom
Golden Sun
Harry Potter
Harry Potter C.of Secrets
Lord of Rings Two Towers
Hoffman's Pro BMX
Fusion
Ance
The Movie
Star Wars: Att. of Clones
Star Wars: N Droid Army
Street Fighter Alpha 3
Super Mario Advance 2
The Two Towers
Tony Hawk's 3
Tony Hawk's 4
Yoshi's Island
Yu-Gi-Oh! Eternal Duelist
Plus Many More...

GBOY COL

Action Man
Alleyway
Buffy The Vampire Slayer
Donkey Kong
Earthworm Jim 2
James Bond 007
Pokemon Blue
Pokemon Crystal
Pokemon Gold
Pokemon Red
Pokemon Silver
Pokemon Trading Card
Pokemon Yellow
Simpsons: T'house Horror
Super Mario Land
Super Mario Land 2
The L. of Zelda (Ages)
Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel Monsters
Zelda: Links Awake. DX
Zelda: Oracle of Seasons
Plus Many More...

N64

Banjo Tooie
Diddy Kong Racing
Goldeneye
Jet Force Gemini
Lylat Wars
Pokemon Stadium 2
Shadowman
The World is not Enough
WWF No Mercy
Zelda
Zelda: Majora's Mask
Plus Many More...

DR'MCAST

Buzz Lightyear Star C.
Chu Chu Rocket
Legacy of Kain
Maken X
Metropolis Street Racer
Phantasy Star Online
Railroad Tycoon 2
Res. Evil: Code Veronica
Speed Devils
Super Runabout
Sword of the Berserk
Plus Many More...

PS ONE

Alone in the Dark 4
Alundra 2
Broken Sword
Chase the Express
Digimon World 3
Dino Crisis
Dracula Last Sanctuary
Dracula Resurrection
Driver 2
Evil Dead
Fear Effect: Retro Helix
Final Fantasy 7
Final Fantasy 8
Gran Turismo 2
Harry Potter
Harry Potter C.of Secrets
LMA Manager 2002
Martian Gothic
Medal of Honor Underg.
MediEvil
Metal Gear Solid
Necronomicon
Parasite Eve 2
Silent Hill
Spyro 3: Year of Dragon
The World is not Enough
Theme Park World
Tomb Raider
Tomb Raider 3
Tomb Raider 4
Tomb Raider 5
Tony Hawk's 3
Tony Hawk's 4
WWF Smackdown 2
Yu-Gi-Oh! F. Memories
Plus Many More...

PC

Age of Empires 2
Age of Mythology
Broken Sword
C&C: Red Alert 2
Champ. Manager 2002
Commandos 2
FIFA 2000
FIFA 2003
Gangsters
Grand Theft Auto 3
Harry Potter C.of Secrets
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Iron Storm
James Bond: Nightfire
Mafia
Max Payne
Medal of Honor: All. A.
Medal of Honor: Sp'head
Operation Flashpoint
RollerCoaster Tycoon II
Sim Golf
SimCity 4
Sims
Sims Hot Date
Sims on Holiday
Sims: Deluxe
Sims: Unleashed
Soldier of Fortune
Soldier of Fortune 2
Star Trek: S. Command 3
Stronghold
Tomb Raider 4
Total Club Manager 2003
Warcraft 3: R. of Chaos
Zoo Tycoon
Plus Many More...

GAMECUBE

007 Agent Under Fire
007 Nightfire
Agent Under Fire
Aggressive Inline
American Pro Trucker
Animal Crossing
Bloody Roar: Primal Fury
Bomberman Generation
Bond 007: Nightfire
Burnout
Capcom vs. SNK: EO
Cel Damage
Clone Wars - Star Wars
Crash Bandicoot
Crazy Taxi
Die Hard: Vendetta
Eternal Darkness
Extreme G 3
F1 2002
FIFA 2003
Fifa World Cup 2002
Freekstyle
Frontline (M. of Honor)
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy
Godzilla: D. all Monsters
Harry Potter C.of Secrets
J.Bond: Agent Under Fire
James Bond: Nightfire
Jedi Knight 2
Legends of Wrestling 1&2
Lost Kingdoms
Luigi's Mansion
Madden NFL 2002
Mario Party 4
Mario Sunshine
Medal of Honor Frontline
Metroid Prime
Minority Report
Mort.Kombat: Deadly All.
Mystic Heroes
NBA Street
Need for Speed H.Purs.2
Nightfire
007 Agent Under Fire
007 Nightfire
Pikmin
Reign Of Fire
Resident Evil
Resident Evil Zero
Robotech: Battlecry
Rocket Power Bch.Bandits
Rocky
Rogue Leader
Scooby Doo: 100 Frights
Sega Soccer Slam
Simpsons: Road Rage
Sonic Adventure 2 Battle
Spiderman The Movie
Spy Hunter
Spyro: Ent.the Dragonfly
SSX Tricky
Star Wars: Clone Wars
Star Wars: J. Knight 2
Star Wars: Rogue Leader
Starfox Adventures
Super Mario Sunshine
Super Monkey Ball
Super Smash Bros Melee
Time Splitters 2
Tony Hawk's 3
Tony Hawk's 4
Top Gun: Combat Zones
Turok: Evolution
Vendetta: Die Hard
WWE Wrestlemania X8
X-Men: Next Dimension
Plus Many More...

X-BOX

007 Nightfire
Agent Under Fire
Azurik: Rise of Perthia
Blade 2
Blinx: The Time Sweeper
Blood Wake
BMX XXX
Bruce Lee: Quest Dragon
Buffy The Vampire Slayer
C.Bandicoot: W.of Cortex
Cel Damage
Champ. Manager 2002
Colin McRae Rally 3
Commandos 2
Conflict: Desert Storm
Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller
Dead or Alive 3
Desert Storm (Conflict)
Driven
Genma Onimusha
Ghost Recon
GT 2002
Halo
Harry Potter C.of Secrets
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hunter: The Reckoning
J.Bond: Agent Under Fire
James Bond: Nightfire
Jedi Knight 2
Jet Set Radio Future
L. of Kain: Blood Omen 2
LMA Manager 2003
Lord of Rings: Fel. of Ring
Marvel vs Capcom 2
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2
Max Payne
Medal of Honor Frontline
Minority Report
Mort.Kombat: Deadly All.
Moto GP
Munch's Oddysee
MX 2002
NBA Inside Drive 2003
NFL 2K2
NFL Fever 2002
NFL Fever 2003
NHL 2002
Night Caster
Nightfire
Obi Wan (Star Wars)
Oddworld: M's Oddysee
Onimusha Genma
007 Nightfire
Outlaw Golf
Project Gotham Racing
Quantum Redshift
Rallisport Challenge
Reign Of Fire
Sega GT 2002
Silent Hill 2
Spiderman The Movie
Splinter Cell
Star Wars - Obi Wan
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter
Star Wars: J. Knight 2
Street Hoops
Terminator: Dawn of Fate
The Fellowship Of Ring
The Thing
Tiger Woods Golf 2003
Time Splitters 2
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
Tony Hawk's 3
Tony Hawk's 4
Turok: Evolution
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger
Plus Many More...

PLAYSTATION 2

A = 0 1
Ace Combat 4: S. Skies
Age of Empires 2
Agent Under Fire
Aggressive Inline
Alone in the Dark 4
Ape Escape 2
Armoured Core 2
Army Men RTS
Atlantis 3: New World
B = 0 2
Big Mutha Truckers
Blade 2
Blood Omen 2
BMX XXX
Burnout
Burnout 2 Point of Impact
C = 0 3
C.Bandicoot: W.of Cortex
Citizen Kabuto (Giants)
Colin McRae Rally 3
Commandos 2
Conflict Zone
Conflict: Desert Storm
D = 0 4
Dark Cloud
Devil May Cry
Dragonball Z: Budokai
Draken: Ancient Gates
Dynasty Warriors 2
Dynasty Warriors 3
E = 0 5
Escape Monkey Island
Extermination
F = 0 6
FIFA 2003
Final Fantasy 10
Fire Blade
G = 0 7
Getaway
Ghost Recon
Gitaroo Man
Golf, Swing Away
Gran Turismo 3
Gran Turismo Concept
Grand T Auto: Vice City
Grand Theft Auto 3
H = 0 8
Half Life
Harry Potter C.of Secrets
Haven: Call of the King
Headhunter
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
J = 1 0
J.Bond: Agent Under Fire
Jak & Daxter
James Bond: Nightfire
K = 1 1
Kingdom Hearts
L = 1 2
Largo Winch
Legaia: Duel Saga
Legends of Wrestling
LMA Manager 2002
LMA Manager 2003
Lord of Rings Two Towers
Lord of Rings: Fel. of Ring
M = 1 3
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2
Max Payne
Medal of Honor Frontline
Metal Gear Solid 2
Midnight Club
Minority Report
Mummy Returns
MX 2002
MX Superfly
N = 1 4
Need for Speed H.Purs.2
Nightfire
No One Lives Forever
O = 1 5
Onimusha 2
Onimusha: Warlords
007 Nightfire
P = 1 6
Prisoner of War
Pro Evolution Soccer 2
Project Eden
Project Zero
R = 1 8
Ratchet and Clank
Red Faction
Red Faction 2
Reign Of Fire
Res.Evil: C. Veronica X
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Rocky
S = 1 9
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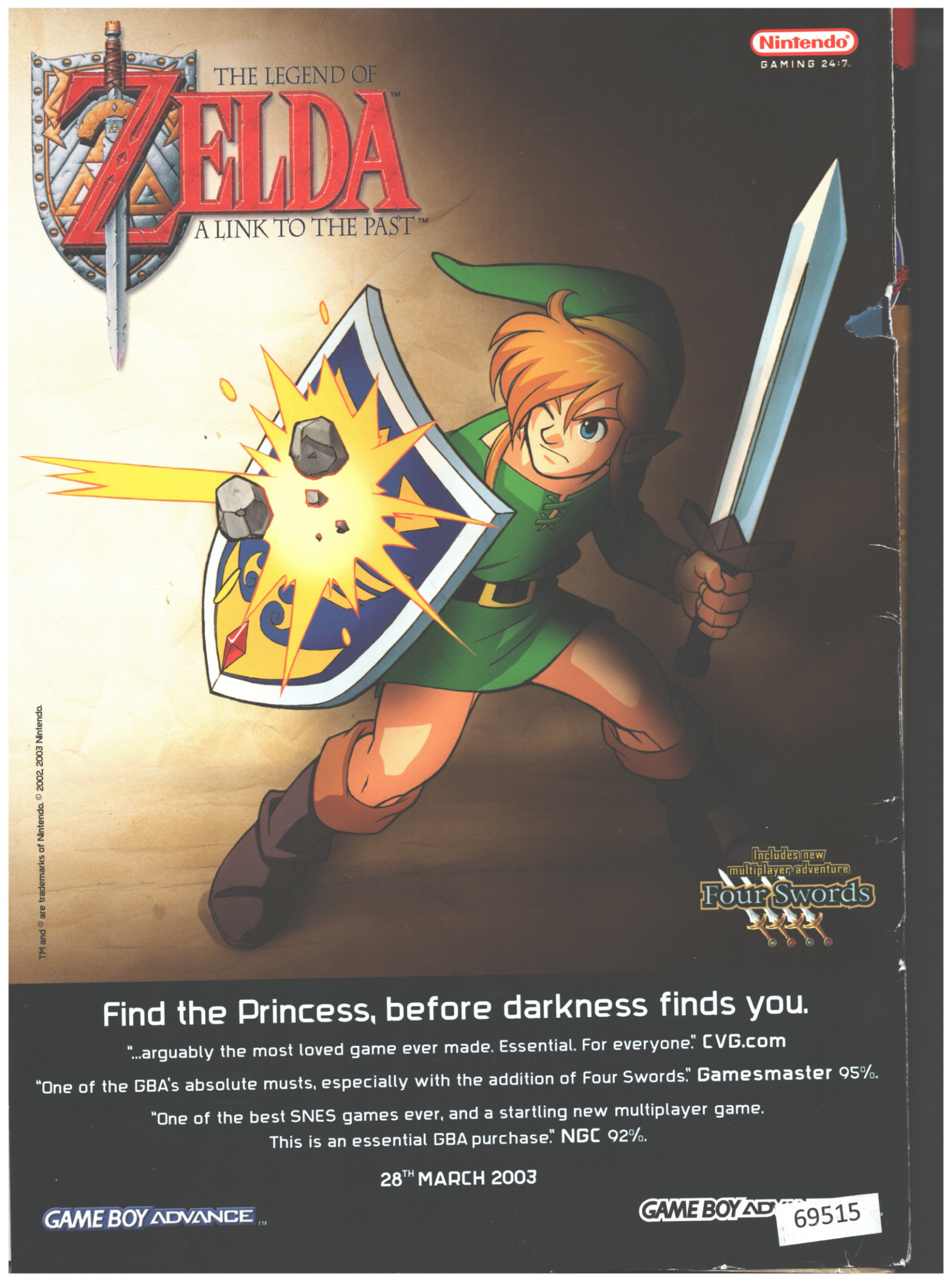
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